This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Library of the University of Michigan
The Coyl Collection.
Miss Jean L. Coyl
of Detroit
in memory of her brother
Col. William Henry Coyl
1894.

Digitized by Google

828
F459
M

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE WORKS

OF

HENRY FIELDING

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

VOLUME NINE

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

AMELIA

Amelia is still the finest woman in England of her age. Booth himself often avers she is as handsome as ever

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE WORKS OF HENRY FIELDING

VOLUME NINE

AMELIA

COMPLETE IN THREE PARTS

PART III.

WITH THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE, AND AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. H. MAYNADIER, PH.D.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

LONDON

GAY AND BIRD

22, BEDFORD ST., W. C.

Digitized by Google

Copyright, 1903, by
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

UNIVERSITY PRESS · JOHN WILSON
AND SON, CAMBRIDGE, U. S. A.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

BOOK IX

CHAPTER ONE

PAGE

In which the history looks backwards 1

CHAPTER TWO

In which the history goes forward 6

CHAPTER THREE

A conversation between Dr. Harrison and others . 13

CHAPTER FOUR

A dialogue between Booth and Amelia 20

CHAPTER FIVE

A conversation between Amelia and Dr. Harrison, with the result 29

CHAPTER SIX

Containing as surprising an accident as is perhaps recorded in history 36

156789

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

CHAPTER SEVEN

PAGE

In which the author appears to be master of that profound learning called the knowledge of the town 45

CHAPTER EIGHT

In which two strangers make their appearance . 51

CHAPTER NINE

A scene of modern wit and humour 59

CHAPTER TEN

A curious conversation between the doctor, the young clergyman, and the young clergyman's father 68

BOOK X

CHAPTER ONE

To which we will prefix no preface 77

CHAPTER TWO

What happened at the masquerade 84

CHAPTER THREE

Consequences of the masquerade, not uncommon nor surprising 98

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

CHAPTER FOUR

PAGE

Consequences of the masquerade 103

CHAPTER FIVE

In which Colonel Bath appears in great glory . . 114

CHAPTER SIX

Read, gamester, and observe 123

CHAPTER SEVEN

In which Booth receives a visit from Captain Trent 129

CHAPTER EIGHT

Contains a letter and other matters 136

CHAPTER NINE

Containing some things worthy observation . . 147

BOOK XI

CHAPTER ONE

Containing a very polite scene 152

CHAPTER TWO

Matters political 161

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

CHAPTER THREE

PAGE

The history of Mr. Trent 172

CHAPTER FOUR

Containing some distress 183

CHAPTER FIVE

Containing more wormwood and other ingredients 189

CHAPTER SIX

A scene of the tragic kind 195

CHAPTER SEVEN

In which Mr. Booth meets with more than one adventure 201

CHAPTER EIGHT

In which Amelia appears in a light more amiable than gay 208

CHAPTER NINE

A very tragic scene 213

BOOK XII

CHAPTER ONE

The book begins with polite history 219

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

CHAPTER TWO

PAGE

In which Amelia visits her husband 223

CHAPTER THREE

Containing matter pertinent to the history . . . 232

CHAPTER FOUR

In which Dr. Harrison visits Colonel James . . 240

CHAPTER FIVE

What passed at the bailiff's house 247

CHAPTER SIX

What passed between the doctor and the sick man 255

CHAPTER SEVEN

In which the history draws towards a conclusion . 264

CHAPTER EIGHT

Thus this history draws nearer to a conclusion . 272

CHAPTER NINE

In which the history is concluded 282

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

AMELIA

BOOK IX

CHAPTER ONE

IN WHICH THE HISTORY LOOKS BACKWARDS.

BEFORE we proceed farther with our history it may be proper to look back a little, in order to account for the late conduct of Doctor Harrison; which, however inconsistent it may have hitherto appeared, when examined to the bottom will be found, I apprehend, to be truly congruous with all the rules of the most perfect prudence as well as with the most consummate goodness.

We have already partly seen in what light Booth had been represented to the doctor abroad. Indeed, the accounts which were sent of the captain, as well by the curate as by a gentleman of the neighbourhood, were much grosser and more to his disadvantage than the doctor was pleased to set them forth in his letter to the person accused. What sense he had of Booth's conduct was, however, manifest by that letter. Nevertheless, he resolved to suspend his final judgment till his return; and, though he censured him, would not absolutely condemn him without ocular demonstration.

Digitized by Google

The doctor, on his return to his parish, found all the accusations which had been transmitted to him confirmed by many witnesses, of which the curate's wife, who had been formerly a friend to Amelia, and still preserved the outward appearance of friendship, was the strongest. She introduced all with — "I am sorry to say it; and it is friendship which bids me speak; and it is for their good it should be told you." After which beginnings she never concluded a single speech without some horrid slander and bitter invective.

Besides the malicious turn which was given to these affairs in the country, which were owing a good deal to misfortune, and some little perhaps to imprudence, the whole neighbourhood rung with several gross and scandalous lies, which were merely the inventions of his enemies, and of which the scene was laid in London since his absence.

Poisoned with all this malice, the doctor came to town; and, learning where Booth lodged, went to make him a visit. Indeed, it was the doctor, and no other, who had been at his lodgings that evening when Booth and Amelia were walking in the Park, and concerning which the reader may be pleased to remember so many strange and odd conjectures.

Here the doctor saw the little gold watch and all those fine trinkets with which the noble lord had presented the children, and which, from the answers given him by the poor ignorant, innocent girl, he could have no doubt had been purchased within a few days by Amelia.

This account tallied so well with the ideas he had

Digitized by Google

imbibed of Booth's extravagance in the country, that he firmly believed both the husband and wife to be the vainest, silliest, and most unjust people alive. It was, indeed, almost incredible that two rational beings should be guilty of such absurdity; but, monstrous and absurd as it was, ocular demonstration appeared to be the evidence against them.

The doctor departed from their lodgings enraged at this supposed discovery, and, unhappily for Booth, was engaged to supper that very evening with the country gentleman of whom Booth had rented a farm. As the poor captain happened to be the subject of conversation, and occasioned their comparing notes, the account which the doctor gave of what he had seen that evening so incensed the gentleman, to whom Booth was likewise a debtor, that he vowed he would take a writ out against him the next morning, and have his body alive or dead; and the doctor was at last persuaded to do the same. Mr. Murphy was thereupon immediately sent for; and the doctor in his presence repeated again what he had seen at his lodgings as the foundation of his suing him, which the attorney, as we have before seen, had blabbed to Atkinson.

But no sooner did the doctor hear that Booth was arrested than the wretched condition of his wife and family began to affect his mind. The children, who were to be utterly undone with their father, were intirely innocent; and as for Amelia herself, though he thought he had most convincing proofs of very blameable levity, yet his former friendship and affection to her were busy to invent every excuse, till, by

Digitized by Google

very heavily loading the husband, they lightened the suspicion against the wife.

In this temper of mind he resolved to pay Amelia a second visit, and was on his way to Mrs. Ellison when the serjeant met him and made himself known to him. The doctor took his old servant into a coffee-house, where he received from him such an account of Booth and his family, that he desired the serjeant to shew him presently to Amelia; and this was the cordial which we mentioned at the end of the ninth chapter of the preceding book.

The doctor became soon satisfied concerning the trinkets which had given him so much uneasiness, and which had brought so much mischief on the head of poor Booth. Amelia likewise gave the doctor some satisfaction as to what he had heard of her husband's behaviour in the country; and assured him, upon her honour, that Booth could so well answer every complaint against his conduct, that she had no doubt but that a man of the doctor's justice and candour would entirely acquit him, and would consider him as an innocent unfortunate man, who was the object of a good man's compassion, not of his anger or resentment.

This worthy clergyman, who was not desirous of finding proofs to condemn the captain or to justify his own vindictive proceedings, but, on the contrary, rejoiced heartily in every piece of evidence which tended to clear up the character of his friend, gave a ready ear to all which Amelia said. To this, indeed, he was induced by the love he always had for that lady, by the good opinion he entertained of

Digitized by Google

her, as well as by pity for her present condition, than which nothing appeared more miserable; for he found her in the highest agonies of grief and despair, with her two little children crying over their wretched mother. These are, indeed, to a well-disposed mind, the most tragical sights that human nature can furnish, and afford a juster motive to grief and tears in the beholder than it would be to see all the heroes who have ever infested the earth hanged all together in a string.

The doctor felt this sight as he ought. He immediately endeavoured to comfort the afflicted; in which he so well succeeded, that he restored to Amelia sufficient spirits to give him the satisfaction we have mentioned: after which he declared he would go and release her husband, which he accordingly did in the manner we have above related.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER TWO

IN WHICH THE HISTORY GOES FORWARD.

WE now return to that period of our history to which we had brought it at the end of our last book.

Booth and his friends arrived from the bailiff's, at the serjeant's lodgings, where Booth immediately ran up-stairs to his Amelia; between whom I shall not attempt to describe the meeting. Nothing certainly was ever more tender or more joyful. This, however, I will observe, that a very few of these exquisite moments, of which the best minds only are capable, do in reality over-balance the longest enjoyments which can ever fall to the lot of the worst.

Whilst Booth and his wife were feasting their souls with the most delicious mutual endearments, the doctor was fallen to play with the two little children below-stairs. While he was thus engaged the little boy did somewhat amiss; upon which the doctor said, "If you do so any more I will take your papa away from you again."—"Again! sir," said the child; "why, was it you then that took away my papa before?" "Suppose it was," said the doctor; "would not you forgive me?" "Yes," cries the child, "I would forgive you; because a Christian

Digitized by Google

must forgive everybody; but I should hate you as long as I live."

The doctor was so pleased with the boy's answer, that he caught him in his arms and kissed him; at which time Booth and his wife returned. The doctor asked which of them was their son's instructor in his religion; Booth answered that he must confess Amelia had all the merit of that kind. "I should have rather thought he had learnt of his father," cries the doctor; "for he seems a good soldier-like Christian, and professes to hate his enemies with a very good grace."

"How, Billy!" cries Amelia. "I am sure I did not teach you so."

"I did not say I would hate my enemies, madam," cries the boy; "I only said I would hate papa's enemies. Sure, mamma, there is no harm in that; nay, I am sure there is no harm in it, for I have heard you say the same thing a thousand times."

The doctor smiled on the child, and, chucking him under the chin, told him he must hate nobody; and now Mrs. Atkinson, who had provided a dinner for them all, desired them to walk up and partake of it.

And now it was that Booth was first made acquainted with the serjeant's marriage, as was Dr. Harrison; both of whom greatly felicitated him upon it.

Mrs. Atkinson, who was, perhaps, a little more confounded than she would have been had she married a colonel, said, "If I have done wrong, Mrs. Booth is to answer for it, for she made the match; indeed, Mr. Atkinson, you are greatly obliged to the

Digitized by Google

character which this lady gives of you." "I hope he will deserve it," said the doctor; "and, if the army hath not corrupted a good boy, I believe I may answer for him."

While our little company were enjoying that happiness which never fails to attend conversation where all present are pleased with each other, a visitant arrived who was, perhaps, not very welcome to any of them. This was no other than Colonel James, who, entering the room with much gaiety, went directly up to Booth, embraced him, and expressed great satisfaction at finding him there; he then made an apology for not attending him in the morning, which he said had been impossible; and that he had, with the utmost difficulty, put off some business of great consequence in order to serve him this afternoon; "but I am glad on your account," cried he to Booth, "that my presence was not necessary."

Booth himself was extremely satisfied with this declaration, and failed not to return him as many thanks as he would have deserved had he performed his promise; but the two ladies were not quite so well satisfied. As for the serjeant, he had slipt out of the room when the colonel entered, not entirely out of that bashfulness which we have remarked him to be tainted with, but indeed, from what had past in the morning, he hated the sight of the colonel as well on the account of his wife as on that of his friend.

The doctor, on the contrary, on what he had formerly heard from both Amelia and her husband of

Digitized by Google

the colonel's generosity and friendship, had built so good an opinion of him, that he was very much pleased with seeing him, and took the first opportunity of telling him so. "Colonel," said the doctor, "I have not the happiness of being known to you; but I have long been desirous of an acquaintance with a gentleman in whose commendation I have heard so much from some present." The colonel made a proper answer to this compliment, and they soon entered into a familiar conversation together; for the doctor was not difficult of access; indeed, he held the strange reserve which is usually practised in this nation between people who are in any degree strangers to each other to be very unbecoming the Christian character.

The two ladies soon left the room; and the remainder of the visit, which was not very long, past in discourse on various common subjects, not worth recording. In the conclusion, the colonel invited Booth and his lady, and the doctor, to dine with him the next day.

To give Colonel James his due commendation, he had shewn a great command of himself and great presence of mind on this occasion; for, to speak the plain truth, the visit was intended to Amelia alone; nor did he expect, or perhaps desire, anything less than to find the captain at home. The great joy which he suddenly conveyed into his countenance at the unexpected sight of his friend is to be attributed to that noble art which is taught in those excellent schools called the several courts of Europe. By this, men are enabled to dress out their coun-

Digitized by Google

tenances as much at their own pleasure as they do their bodies, and to put on friendship with as much ease as they can a laced coat.

When the colonel and doctor were gone, Booth acquainted Amelia with the invitation he had received. She was so struck with the news, and betrayed such visible marks of confusion and uneasiness, that they could not have escaped Booth's observation had suspicion given him the least hint to remark; but this, indeed, is the great optic-glass helping us to discern plainly almost all that passes in the minds of others, without some use of which nothing is more purblind than human nature.

Amelia, having recovered from her first perturbation, answered, "My dear, I will dine with you wherever you please to lay your commands on me." "I am obliged to you, my dear soul," cries Booth; "your obedience shall be very easy, for my command will be that you shall always follow your own inclinations." "My inclinations," answered she, "would, I am afraid, be too unreasonable a confinement to you; for they would always lead me to be with you and your children, with at most a single friend or two now and then." "O my dear!" replied he, "large companies give us a greater relish for our own society when we return to it; and we shall be extremely merry, for Doctor Harrison dines with us." "I hope you will, my dear," cries she; "but I own I should have been better pleased to have enjoyed a few days with yourself and the children, with no other person but Mrs. Atkinson, for whom I have conceived a violent affection, and who would have

Digitized by Google

given us but little interruption. However, if you have promised, I must undergo the penance." "Nay, child," cried he, "I am sure I would have refused, could I have guessed it had been in the least disagreeable to you; though I know your objection." "Objection!" cries Amelia eagerly; "I have no objection." "Nay, nay," said he, "come, be honest, I know your objection, though you are unwilling to own it." "Good Heavens!" cryed Amelia, frightened, "what do you mean? what objection?" "Why," answered he, "to the company of Mrs. James; and I must confess she hath not behaved to you lately as you might have expected; but you ought to pass all that by for the sake of her husband, to whom we have both so many obligations, who is the worthiest, honestest, and most generous fellow in the universe, and the best friend to me that ever man had."

Amelia, who had far other suspicions, and began to fear that her husband had discovered them, was highly pleased when she saw him taking a wrong scent. She gave, therefore, a little in to the deceit, and acknowledged the truth of what he had mentioned; but said that the pleasure she should have in complying with his desires would highly recompense any dissatisfaction which might arise on any other account; and shortly after ended the conversation on this subject with her chearfully promising to fulfil his promise.

In reality, poor Amelia had now a most unpleasant task to undertake; for she thought it absolutely necessary to conceal from her husband the opinion

Digitized by Google

she had conceived of the colonel. For, as she knew the characters, as well of her husband as of his friend, or rather enemy (both being often synonymous in the language of the world), she had the utmost reason to apprehend something very fatal might attend her husband's entertaining the same thought of James which filled and tormented her own breast.

And, as she knew that nothing but these thoughts could justify the least unkind, or, indeed, the least reserved behaviour to James, who had, in all appearance, conferred the greatest obligations upon Booth and herself, she was reduced to a dilemma the most dreadful that can attend a virtuous woman, as it often gives the highest triumph, and sometimes no little advantage, to the men of professed gallantry.

In short, to avoid giving any umbrage to her husband, Amelia was forced to act in a manner which she was conscious must give encouragement to the colonel; a situation which perhaps requires as great prudence and delicacy as any in which the heroic part of the female character can be exerted.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER THREE

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN DR. HARRISON AND OTHERS.

THE next day Booth and his lady, with the doctor, met at Colonel James's, where Colonel Bath likewise made one of the company.

Nothing very remarkable passed at dinner, or till the ladies withdrew. During this time, however, the behaviour of Colonel James was such as gave some uneasiness to Amelia, who well understood his meaning, though the particulars were too refined and subtle to be observed by any other present.

When the ladies were gone, which was as soon as Amelia could prevail on Mrs. James to depart, Colonel Bath, who had been pretty brisk with champagne at dinner, soon began to display his magnanimity. "My brother tells me, young gentleman," said he to Booth, "that you have been used very ill lately by some rascals, and I have no doubt but you will do yourself justice."

Booth answered that he did not know what he meant. "Since I must mention it then," cries the colonel, "I hear you have been arrested; and I think you know what satisfaction is to be required by a man of honour."

"I beg, sir," says the doctor, "no more may be mentioned of that matter. I am convinced no satis-

Digitized by Google

faction will be required of the captain till he is able to give it."

"I do not understand what you mean by able," cries the colonel. To which the doctor answered, "that it was of too tender a nature to speak more of."

"Give me your hand, doctor," cries the colonel; "I see you are a man of honour, though you wear a gown. It is, as you say, a matter of a tender nature. Nothing, indeed, is so tender as a man's honour. Curse my liver, if any man — I mean, that is, if any gentleman, was to arrest me, I would as surely cut his throat as —"

"How, sir!" said the doctor, "would you compensate one breach of the law by a much greater, and pay your debts by committing murder?"

"Why do you mention law between gentlemen?" says the colonel. "A man of honour wears his law by his side; and can the resentment of an affront make a gentleman guilty of murder? and what greater affront can one man cast upon another than by arresting him? I am convinced that he who would put up an arrest would put up a slap in the face."

Here the colonel looked extremely fierce, and the divine stared with astonishment at this doctrine; when Booth, who well knew the impossibility of opposing the colonel's humour with success, began to play with it; and, having first conveyed a private wink to the doctor, he said there might be cases undoubtedly where such an affront ought to be resented; but that there were others where any

Digitized by Google

resentment was impracticable: "As, for instance," said he, "where the man is arrested by a woman."

"I could not be supposed to mean that case," cries the colonel; "and you are convinced I did not mean it."

"To put an end to this discourse at once, sir," said the doctor, "I was the plaintiff at whose suit this gentleman was arrested."

"Was you so, sir?" cries the colonel; "then I have no more to say. Women and the clergy are upon the same footing. The long-robed gentry are exempted from the laws of honour."

"I do not thank you for that exemption, sir," cries the doctor; "and, if honour and fighting are, as they seem to be, synonymous words with you, I believe there are some clergymen, who in defence of their religion, or their country, or their friend, the only justifiable causes of fighting, except bare self-defence, would fight as bravely as yourself, colonel! and that without being paid for it."

"Sir, you are privileged," says the colonel, with great dignity; "and you have my leave to say what you please. I respect your order, and you cannot offend me."

"I will not offend you, colonel," cries the doctor; "and our order is very much obliged to you, since you profess so much respect to us, and pay none to our Master."

"What Master, sir?" said the colonel.

"That Master," answered the doctor, "who hath expressly forbidden all that cutting of throats to which you discover so much inclination."

Digitized by Google

"O! your servant, sir," said the colonel; "I see what you are driving at; but you shall not persuade me to think that religion forces me to be a coward."

"I detest and despise the name as much as you can," cries the doctor; "but you have a wrong idea of the word, colonel. What were all the Greeks and Romans? were these cowards? and yet, did you ever hear of this butchery, which we call duelling, among them?"

"Yes, indeed, have I," cries the colonel. "What else is all Mr. Pope's Homer full of but duels? Did not what 's his name, one of the Agamemnons, fight with that paultry rascal Paris? and Diomede with what d' ye call him there? and Hector with I forget his name, he that was Achilles's bosom-friend; and afterwards with Achilles himself? Nay, and in Dryden's Virgil, is there anything almost besides fighting?"

"You are a man of learning, colonel," cries the doctor; "but —"

"I thank you for that compliment," said the colonel. — "No, sir, I do not pretend to learning; but I have some little reading, and I am not ashamed to own it."

"But are you sure, colonel," cries the doctor, "that you have not made a small mistake? for I am apt to believe both Mr. Pope and Mr. Dryden (though I cannot say I ever read a word of either of them) speak of wars between nations, and not of private duels; for of the latter I do not remember one single instance in all the Greek and Roman story. In short,

Digitized by Google

it is a modern custom, introduced by barbarous nations since the times of Christianity; though it is a direct and audacious defiance of the Christian law, and is consequently much more sinful in us than it would have been in the heathens."

"Drink about, doctor," cries the colonel; "and let us call a new cause; for I perceive we shall never agree on this. You are a Churchman, and I don't expect you to speak your mind."

"We are both of the same Church, I hope," cries the doctor.

"I am of the Church of England, sir," answered the colonel, "and will fight for it to the last drop of my blood."

"It is very generous in you, colonel," cries the doctor, "to fight so zealously for a religion by which you are to be damned."

"It is well for you, doctor," cries the colonel, "that you wear a gown; for, by all the dignity of a man, if any other person had said the words you have just uttered, I would have made him eat them; ay, d—n me, and my sword into the bargain."

Booth began to be apprehensive that this dispute might grow too warm; in which case he feared that the colonel's honour, together with the champagne, might hurry him so far as to forget the respect due, and which he professed to pay, to the sacerdotal robe. Booth therefore interposed between the disputants, and said that the colonel had very rightly proposed to call a new subject; for that it was impossible to reconcile accepting a challenge with the Christian religion, or refusing it with the modern

Digitized by Google

notion of honour. "And you must allow it, doctor," said he, "to be a very hard injunction for a man to become infamous; and more especially for a soldier, who is to lose his bread into the bargain."

"Ay, sir," says the colonel, with an air of triumph, "what say you to that?"

"Why, I say," cries the doctor, "that it is much harder to be damned on the other side."

"That may be," said the colonel; "but damn me, if I would take an affront of any man breathing, for all that. And yet I believe myself to be as good a Christian as wears a head. My maxim is, never to give an affront, nor ever to take one; and I say that it is the maxim of a good Christian, and no man shall ever persuade me to the contrary."

"Well, sir," said the doctor, "since that is your resolution, I hope no man will ever give you an affront."

"I am obliged to you for your hope, doctor," cries the colonel, with a sneer; "and he that doth, will be obliged to you for lending him your gown; for, by the dignity of a man, nothing out of petticoats, I believe, dares affront me."

Colonel James had not hitherto joined in the discourse. In truth, his thoughts had been otherwise employed; nor is it very difficult for the reader to guess what had been the subject of them. Being waked, however, from his reverie, and having heard the two or three last speeches, he turned to his brother, and asked him, why he would introduce such a topic of conversation before a gentleman of Doctor Harrison's character?

Digitized by Google

"Brother," cried Bath, "I own it was wrong, and I ask the doctor's pardon: I know not how it happened to arise; for you know, brother, I am not used to talk of these matters. They are generally poltroons that do. I think I need not be beholden to my tongue to declare I am none. I have shown myself in a line of battle. I believe there is no man will deny that; I believe I may say no man dares deny that I have done my duty."

The colonel was thus proceeding to prove that his prowess was neither the subject of his discourse nor the object of his vanity, when a servant entered and summoned the company to tea with the ladies; a summons which Colonel James instantly obeyed, and was followed by all the rest.

But as the tea-table conversation, though extremely delightful to those who are engaged in it, may probably appear somewhat dull to the reader, we will here put an end to the chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FOUR

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN BOOTH AND AMELIA.

THE next morning early, Booth went by appointment and waited on Colonel James; whence he returned to Amelia in that kind of disposition which the great master of human passione would describe in Andromache, when he tells us she cried and smiled at the same instant.

Amelia plainly perceived the discomposure of his mind, in which the opposite affections of joy and grief were struggling for the superiority, and begged to know the occasion; upon which Booth spoke as follows: —

"My dear," said he, "I had no intention to conceal from you what hath past this morning between me and the colonel, who hath oppressed me, if I may use that expression, with obligations. Sure never man had such a friend; for never was there so noble, so generous a heart — I cannot help this ebullition of gratitude, I really cannot." Here he paused a moment, and wiped his eyes, and then proceeded: "You know, my dear, how gloomy the prospect was yesterday before our eyes, how inevitable ruin stared me in the face; and the dreadful idea of having entailed beggary on my Amelia and her posterity racked my mind; for though, by the goodness of

Digitized by Google

the doctor, I had regained my liberty, the debt yet remained; and, if that worthy man had a design of forgiving me his share, this must have been my utmost hope, and the condition in which I must still have found myself need not to be expatiated on. In what light, then, shall I see, in what words shall I relate, the colonel's kindness? O my dear Amelia! he hath removed the whole gloom at once, hath driven all despair out of my mind, and hath filled it with the most sanguine, and, at the same time, the most reasonable hopes of making a comfortable provision for yourself and my dear children. In the first place, then, he will advance me a sum of money to pay off all my debts; and this on a bond to be repaid only when I shall become colonel of a regiment, and not before. In the next place, he is gone this very morning to ask a company for me, which is now vacant in the West Indies; and, as he intends to push this with all his interest, neither he nor I have any doubt of his success. Now, my dear, comes the third, which, though perhaps it ought to give me the greatest joy, such is, I own, the weakness of my nature, it rends my very heartstrings asunder. I cannot mention it, for I know it will give you equal pain; though I know, on all proper occasions, you can exert a manly resolution. You will not, I am convinced, oppose it, whatever you must suffer in complying. O my dear Amelia! I must suffer likewise; yet I have resolved to bear it. You know not what my poor heart hath suffered since he made the proposal. It is love for you alone which could persuade me to submit to it. Consider

Digitized by Google

our situation; consider that of our children; reflect but on those poor babes, whose future happiness is at stake, and it must arm your resolution. It is your interest and theirs that reconciled me to a proposal which, when the colonel first made it, struck me with the utmost horror; he hath, indeed, from these motives, persuaded me into a resolution which I thought impossible for any one to have persuaded me into. O my dear Amelia! let me entreat you to give me up to the good of your children, as I have promised the colonel to give you up to their interest and your own. If you refuse these terms we are still undone, for he insists absolutely upon them. Think, then, my love, however hard they may be, necessity compels us to submit to them. I know in what light a woman, who loves like you, must consider such a proposal; and yet how many instances have you of women who, from the same motives, have submitted to the same!"

"What can you mean, Mr. Booth?" cries Amelia, trembling.

"Need I explain my meaning to you more?" answered Booth. — "Did I not say I must give up my Amelia?"

"Give me up!" said she.

"For a time only, I mean," answered he: "for a short time perhaps. The colonel himself will take care it shall not be long — for I know his heart; I shall scarce have more joy in receiving you back than he will have in restoring you to my arms. In the meantime, he will not only be a father to my children, but a husband to you."

Digitized by Google

"A husband to me!" said Amelia.

"Yes, my dear; a kind, a fond, a tender, an affectionate husband. If I had not the most certain assurances of this, doth my Amelia think I could be prevailed on to leave her? No, my Amelia, he is the only man on earth who could have prevailed on me; but I know his house, his purse, his protection, will be all at your command. And as for any dislike you have conceived to his wife, let not that be any objection; for I am convinced he will not suffer her to insult you; besides, she is extremely well bred, and, how much soever she may hate you in her heart, she will at least treat you with civility.

"Nay, the invitation is not his, but hers; and I am convinced they will both behave to you with the greatest friendship; his I am sure will be sincere, as to the wife of a friend entrusted to his care; and hers will, from good-breeding, have not only the appearances but the effects of the truest friendship."

"I understand you, my dear, at last," said she (indeed she had rambled into very strange conceits from some parts of his discourse); "and I will give you my resolution in a word — I will do the duty of a wife, and that is, to attend her husband wherever he goes."

Booth attempted to reason with her, but all to no purpose. She gave, indeed, a quiet hearing to all he said, and even to those parts which most displeased her ears; I mean those in which he exaggerated the great goodness and disinterested generosity of his friend; but her resolution remained inflexible, and resisted the force of all his arguments with a

Digitized by Google

steadiness of opposition, which it would have been almost excusable in him to have construed into stubbornness.

The doctor arrived in the midst of the dispute; and, having heard the merits of the cause on both sides, delivered his opinion in the following words.

"I have always thought it, my dear children, a matter of the utmost nicety to interfere in any differences between husband and wife; but, since you both desire me with such earnestness to give you my sentiments on the present contest between you, I will give you my thoughts as well as I am able. In the first place then, can anything be more reasonable than for a wife to desire to attend her husband? It is, as my favourite child observes, no more than a desire to do her duty; and I make no doubt but that is one great reason of her insisting on it. And how can you yourself oppose it? Can love be its own enemy? or can a husband who is fond of his wife, content himself almost on any account with a long absence from her?"

"You speak like an angel, my dear Doctor Harrison," answered Amelia: "I am sure, if he loved as tenderly as I do, he could on no account submit to it."

"Pardon me, child," cries the doctor; "there are some reasons which would not only justify his leaving you, but which must force him, if he hath any real love for you, joined with common sense, to make that election. If it was necessary, for instance, either to your good or to the good of your children, he would not deserve the name of a man, I am sure not that

Digitized by Google

of a husband, if he hesitated a moment. Nay, in that case, I am convinced you yourself would be an advocate for what you now oppose. I fancy therefore I mistook him when I apprehended he said that the colonel made his leaving you behind as the condition of getting him the commission; for I know my dear child hath too much goodness, and too much sense, and too much resolution, to prefer any temporary indulgence of her own passions to the solid advantages of her whole family."

"There, my dear!" cries Booth; "I knew what opinion the doctor would be of. Nay, I am certain there is not a wise man in the kingdom who would say otherwise."

"Don't abuse me, young gentleman," said the doctor, "with appellations I don't deserve."

"I abuse you, my dear doctor!" cries Booth.

"Yes, my dear sir," answered the doctor; "you insinuated slily that I was wise, which, as the world understands the phrase, I should be ashamed of; and my comfort is that no one can accuse me justly of it. I have just given an instance of the contrary by throwing away my advice."

"I hope, sir," cries Booth, "that will not be the case."

"Yes, sir," answered the doctor. "I know it will be the case in the present instance, for either you will not go at all, or my little turtle here will go with you."

"You are in the right, doctor," cries Amelia.

"I am sorry for it," said the doctor, "for then I assure you you are in the wrong."

Digitized by Google

"Indeed," cries Amelia, "if you knew all my reasons you would say they were very strong ones."

"Very probably," cries the doctor. "The knowledge that they are in the wrong is a very strong reason to some women to continue so."

"Nay, doctor," cries Amelia, "you shall never persuade me of that. I will not believe that any human being ever did an action merely because they knew it to be wrong."

"I am obliged to you, my dear child," said the doctor, "for declaring your resolution of not being persuaded. Your husband would never call me a wise man again if, after that declaration, I should attempt to persuade you."

"Well, I must be content," cries Amelia, "to let you think as you please."

"That is very gracious, indeed," said the doctor. "Surely, in a country where the church suffers others to think as they please, it would be very hard if they had not themselves the same liberty. And yet, as unreasonable as the power of controuling men's thoughts is represented, I will shew you how you shall controul mine whenever you desire it."

"How, pray?" cries Amelia. "I should greatly esteem that power."

"Why, whenever you act like a wise woman," cries the doctor, "you will force me to think you so: and, whenever you are pleased to act as you do now, I shall be obliged, whether I will or no, to think as I do now."

"Nay, dear doctor," cries Booth, "I am convinced my Amelia will never do anything to forfeit your

Digitized by Google

good opinion. Consider but the cruel hardship of what she is to undergo, and you will make allowances for the difficulty she makes in complying. To say the truth, when I examine my own heart, I have more obligations to her than appear at first sight; for, by obliging me to find arguments to persuade her, she hath assisted me in conquering myself. Indeed, if she had shewn more resolution, I should have shewn less."

"So you think it necessary, then," said the doctor, "that there should be one fool at least in every married couple. A mighty resolution, truly! and well worth your valuing yourself upon, to part with your wife for a few months in order to make the fortune of her and your children; when you are to leave her, too, in the care and protection of a friend that gives credit to the old stories of friendship, and doth an honour to human nature. What, in the name of goodness! do either of you think that you have made an union to endure for ever? How will either of you bear that separation which must, some time or other, and perhaps very soon, be the lot of one of you? Have you forgot that you are both mortal? As for Christianity, I see you have resigned all pretensions to it; for I make no doubt but that you have so set your hearts on the happiness you enjoy here together, that neither of you ever think a word of hereafter."

Amelia now burst into tears; upon which Booth begged the doctor to proceed no farther. Indeed, he would not have wanted the caution; for, however blunt he appeared in his discourse, he had a tender-

Digitized by Google

ness of heart which is rarely found among men; for which I know no other reason than that true goodness is rarely found among them; for I am firmly persuaded that the latter never possessed any human mind in any degree, without being attended by as large a portion of the former.

Thus ended the conversation on this subject; what followed is not worth relating, till the doctor carried off Booth with him to take a walk in the Park.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FIVE

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN AMELIA AND DR. HARRISON, WITH THE RESULT.

AMELIA, being left alone, began to consider seriously of her condition; she saw it would be very difficult to resist the importunities of her husband, backed by the authority of the doctor, especially as she well knew how unreasonable her declarations must appear to every one who was ignorant of her real motives to persevere in it. On the other hand, she was fully determined, whatever might be the consequence, to adhere firmly to her resolution of not accepting the colonel's invitation.

When she had turned the matter every way in her mind, and vexed and tormented herself with much uneasy reflexion upon it, a thought at last occurred to her which immediately brought her some comfort. This was, to make a confidant of the doctor, and to impart to him the whole truth. This method, indeed, appeared to her now to be so adviseable, that she wondered she had not hit upon it sooner; but it is the nature of despair to blind us to all the means of safety, however easy and apparent they may be.

Having fixed her purpose in her mind, she wrote a short note to the doctor, in which she acquainted

Digitized by Google

him that she had something of great moment to impart to him, which must be an entire secret from her husband, and begged that she might have an opportunity of communicating it as soon as possible.

Doctor Harrison received the letter that afternoon, and immediately complied with Amelia's request in visiting her. He found her drinking tea with her husband and Mrs. Atkinson, and sat down and joined the company.

Soon after the removal of the tea-table Mrs. Atkinson left the room. The doctor then, turning to Booth, said, "I hope, captain, you have a true sense of the obedience due to the church, though our clergy do not often exact it. However, it is proper to exercise our power sometimes, in order to remind the laity of their duty. I must tell you, therefore, that I have some private business with your wife; and I expect your immediate absence."

"Upon my word, doctor," answered Booth, "no Popish confessor, I firmly believe, ever pronounced his will and pleasure with more gravity and dignity; none therefore was ever more immediately obeyed than you shall be." Booth then quitted the room, and desired the doctor to recall him when his business with the lady was over.

Doctor Harrison promised he would; and then turning to Amelia he said, "Thus far, madam, I have obeyed your commands, and am now ready to receive the important secret which you mention in your note." Amelia now informed her friend of all she knew, all she had seen and heard, and all that she suspected, of the colonel. The good man seemed greatly shocked

Digitized by Google

at the relation, and remained in a silent astonishment. Upon which Amelia said, "Is villany so rare a thing, sir, that it should so much surprize you?" "No, child," cries he; "but I am shocked at seeing it so artfully disguised under the appearance of so much virtue; and, to confess the truth, I believe my own vanity is a little hurt in having been so grossly imposed upon. Indeed, I had a very high regard for this man; for, besides the great character given him by your husband, and the many facts I have heard so much redounding to his honour, he hath the fairest and most promising appearance I have ever yet beheld. A good face, they say, is a letter of recommendation. O Nature, Nature, why art thou so dishonest as ever to send men with these false recommendations into the world?"

"Indeed, my dear sir, I begin to grow entirely sick of it," cries Amelia; "for sure all mankind almost are villains in their hearts."

"Fie, child!" cries the doctor. "Do not make a conclusion so much to the dishonour of the great Creator. The nature of man is far from being in itself evil; it abounds with benevolence, charity, and pity, coveting praise and honour, and shunning shame and disgrace. Bad education, bad habits, and bad customs, debauch our nature, and drive it headlong as it were into vice. The governors of the world, and I am afraid the priesthood, are answerable for the badness of it. Instead of discouraging wickedness to the utmost of their power, both are too apt to connive at it. In the great sin of adultery, for instance; hath the government provided any law to

Digitized by Google

punish it? or doth the priest take any care to correct it? on the contrary, is the most notorious practice of it any detriment to a man's fortune or to his reputation in the world? doth it exclude him from any preferment in the state, I had almost said in the church? is it any blot in his escutcheon? any bar to his honour? is he not to be found every day in the assemblies of women of the highest quality? in the closets of the greatest men, and even at the tables of bishops? What wonder then if the community in general treat this monstrous crime as a matter of jest, and that men give way to the temptations of a violent appetite, when the indulgence of it is protected by law and countenanced by custom? I am convinced there are good stamina in the nature of this very man; for he hath done acts of friendship and generosity to your husband before he could have any evil design on your chastity; and in a Christian society, which I no more esteem this nation to be than I do any part of Turkey, I doubt not but this very colonel would have made a worthy and valuable member."

"Indeed, my dear sir," cries Amelia, "you are the wisest as well as best man in the world—"

"Not a word of my wisdom," cries the doctor. "I have not a grain—I am not the least versed in the Chrematistic[1] art, as an old friend of mine calls it. I know not how to get a shilling, nor how to keep it in my pocket if I had it."

"But you understand human nature to the bottom,"

[1] The art of getting wealth is so called by Aristotle in his Politics.

Digitized by Google

answered Amelia; "and your mind is the treasury of all ancient and modern learning."

"You are a little flatterer," cries the doctor; "but I dislike you not for it. And, to shew you I don't, I will return your flattery, and tell you you have acted with great prudence in concealing this affair from your husband; but you have drawn me into a scrape; for I have promised to dine with this fellow again to-morrow, and you have made it impossible for me to keep my word."

"Nay, but, dear sir," cries Amelia, "for Heaven's sake take care! If you shew any kind of disrespect to the colonel, my husband may be led into some suspicion — especially after our conference."

"Fear nothing, child. I will give him no hint; and, that I may be certain of not doing it, I will stay away. You do not think, I hope, that I will join in a chearful conversation with such a man; that I will so far betray my character as to give any countenance to such flagitious proceedings. Besides, my promise was only conditional; and I do not know whether I could otherwise have kept it; for I expect an old friend every day who comes to town twenty miles on foot to see me, whom I shall not part with on any account; for, as he is very poor, he may imagine I treat him with disrespect."

"Well, sir," cries Amelia, "I must admire you and love you for your goodness."

"Must you love me?" cries the doctor. "I could cure you now in a minute if I pleased."

"Indeed, I defy you, sir," said Amelia.

"If I could but persuade you," answered he, "that

Digitized by Google

I thought you not handsome, away would vanish all ideas of goodness in an instant. Confess honestly, would they not?"

"Perhaps I might blame the goodness of your eyes," replied Amelia; "and that is perhaps an honester confession than you expected. But do, pray, sir, be serious, and give me your advice what to do. Consider the difficult game I have to play; for I am sure, after what I have told you, you would not even suffer me to remain under the roof of this colonel."

"No, indeed, would I not," said the doctor, "whilst I have a house of my own to entertain you."

"But how to dissuade my husband," continued she, "without giving him any suspicion of the real cause, the consequences of his guessing at which I tremble to think upon."

"I will consult my pillow upon it," said the doctor; "and in the morning you shall see me again. In the mean time be comforted, and compose the perturbations of your mind."

"Well, sir," said she, "I put my whole trust in you."

"I am sorry to hear it," cries the doctor. "Your innocence may give you a very confident trust in a much more powerful assistance. However, I will do all I can to serve you: and now, if you please, we will call back your husband; for, upon my word, he hath shewn a good catholic patience. And where is the honest serjeant and his wife? I am pleased with the behaviour of you both to that worthy fellow, in opposition to the custom of the world; which, instead of being formed on the precepts of our religion

Digitized by Google

to consider each other as brethren, teaches us to regard those who are a degree below us, either in rank or fortune, as a species of beings of an inferior order in the creation."

The captain now returned into the room, as did the serjeant and Mrs. Atkinson; and the two couple, with the doctor, spent the evening together in great mirth and festivity; for the doctor was one of the best companions in the world, and a vein of chearfulness, good humour, and pleasantry, ran through his conversation, with which it was impossible to resist being pleased.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SIX

CONTAINING AS SURPRIZING AN ACCIDENT AS IS PERHAPS RECORDED IN HISTORY.

BOOTH had acquainted the serjeant with the great goodness of Colonel James, and with the chearful prospects which he entertained from it. This Atkinson, behind the curtain, communicated to his wife. The conclusion which she drew from it need scarce be hinted to the reader. She made, indeed, no scruple of plainly and bluntly telling her husband that the colonel had a most manifest intention to attack the chastity of Amelia.

This thought gave the poor serjeant great uneasiness, and, after having kept him long awake, tormented him in his sleep with a most horrid dream, in which he imagined that he saw the colonel standing by the bed-side of Amelia, with a naked sword in his hand, and threatening to stab her instantly unless she complied with his desires. Upon this the serjeant started up in his bed, and, catching his wife by the throat, cried out, "D—n you, put up your sword this instant, and leave the room, or by Heaven I'll drive mine to your heart's blood!"

This rough treatment immediately roused Mrs. Atkinson from her sleep, who no sooner perceived the position of her husband, and felt his hand grasp-

Digitized by Google

ing her throat, than she gave a violent shriek and presently fell into a fit.

Atkinson now waked likewise, and soon became sensible of the violent agitations of his wife. He immediately leapt out of bed, and running for a bottle of water, began to sprinkle her very plentifully; but all to no purpose: she neither spoke nor gave any symptoms of recovery. Atkinson then began to roar aloud; upon which Booth, who lay under him, jumped from his bed, and ran up with the lighted candle in his hand. The serjeant had no sooner taken the candle than he ran with it to the bed-side. Here he beheld a sight which almost deprived him of his senses. The bed appeared to be all over blood, and his wife weltering in the midst of it. Upon this the serjeant, almost in a frenzy, cried out, "O Heavens! I have killed my wife. I have stabbed her! I have stabbed her!" "What can be the meaning of all this?" said Booth. "O, sir!" cries the serjeant, "I dreamt I was rescuing your lady from the hands of Colonel James, and I have killed my poor wife." — Here he threw himself upon the bed by her, caught her in his arms, and behaved like one frantic with despair.

By this time Amelia had thrown on a wrapping-gown, and was come up into the room, where the serjeant and his wife were lying on the bed and Booth standing like a motionless statue by the bed-side. Amelia had some difficulty to conquer the effects of her own surprize on this occasion; for a more ghastly and horrible sight than the bed presented could not be conceived.

Digitized by Google

Amelia sent Booth to call up the maid of the house, in order to lend her assistance; but before his return Mrs. Atkinson began to come to herself; and soon after, to the inexpressible joy of the serjeant, it was discovered she had no wound. Indeed, the delicate nose of Amelia soon made that discovery, which the grosser smell of the serjeant, and perhaps his fright, had prevented him from making; for now it appeared that the red liquor with which the bed was stained, though it may, perhaps, sometimes run through the veins of a fine lady, was not what is properly called blood, but was, indeed, no other than cherry-brandy, a bottle of which Mrs. Atkinson always kept in her room to be ready for immediate use, and to which she used to apply for comfort in all her afflictions. This the poor serjeant, in his extreme hurry, had mistaken for a bottle of water. Matters were now soon accommodated, and no other mischief appeared to be done, unless to the bed-cloaths. Amelia and Booth returned back to their room, and Mrs. Atkinson rose from her bed in order to equip it with a pair of clean sheets.

And thus this adventure would have ended without producing any kind of consequence, had not the words which the serjeant uttered in his frenzy made some slight impression on Booth; so much, at least, as to awaken his curiosity; so that in the morning when he arose he sent for the serjeant, and desired to hear the particulars of this dream, since Amelia was concerned in it.

The serjeant at first seemed unwilling to comply, and endeavoured to make excuses. This, perhaps,

Digitized by Google

encreased Booth's curiosity, and he said, "Nay, I am resolved to hear it. Why, you simpleton, do you imagine me weak enough to be affected by a dream, however terrible it may be?"

"Nay, sir," cries the serjeant, "as for that matter, dreams have sometimes fallen out to be true. One of my own, I know, did so, concerning your honour; for, when you courted my young lady, I dreamt you was married to her; and yet it was at a time when neither I myself, nor any of the country, thought you would ever obtain her. But Heaven forbid this dream should ever come to pass!"

"Why, what was this dream?" cries Booth. "I insist on knowing."

"To be sure, sir," cries the serjeant, "I must not refuse you; but I hope you will never think any more of it. Why then, sir, I dreamt that your honour was gone to the West Indies, and had left my lady in the care of Colonel James; and last night I dreamt the colonel came to my lady's bedside, offering to ravish her, and with a drawn sword in his hand, threatening to stab her that moment unless she would comply with his desires. How I came to be by I know not; but I dreamt I rushed upon him, caught him by the throat, and swore I would put him to death unless he instantly left the room. Here I waked, and this was my dream. I never paid any regard to a dream in my life—but, indeed, I never dreamt anything so very plain as this. It appeared downright reality. I am sure I have left the marks of my fingers in my wife's throat. I would not have taken a hundred pound to have used her so."

Digitized by Google

"Faith," cries Booth, "it was an odd dream, and not so easily to be accounted for as that you had formerly of my marriage; for, as Shakespear says, *dreams denote a foregone conclusion.* Now it is impossible you should ever have thought of any such matter as this."

"However, sir," cries the serjeant, "it is in your honour's power to prevent any possibility of this dream's coming to pass, by not leaving my lady to the care of the colonel; if you must go from her, certainly there are other places where she may be with great safety; and, since my wife tells me that my lady is so very unwilling, whatever reasons she may have, I hope your honour will oblige her."

"Now I recollect it," cries Booth, "Mrs. Atkinson hath once or twice dropt some disrespectful words of the colonel. He hath done something to disoblige her."

"He hath indeed, sir," replied the serjeant: "he hath said that of her which she doth not deserve, and for which, if he had not been my superior officer, I would have cut both his ears off. Nay, for that matter, he can speak ill of other people besides her."

"Do you know, Atkinson," cries Booth, very gravely, "that you are talking of the dearest friend I have?"

"To be honest then," answered the serjeant, "I do not think so. If I did, I should love him much better than I do."

"I must and will have this explained," cries Booth. "I have too good an opinion of you, Atkinson, to

Digitized by Google

think you would drop such things as you have without some reason — and I will know it."

"I am sorry I have dropt a word," cries Atkinson. "I am sure I did not intend it; and your honour hath drawn it from me unawares."

"Indeed, Atkinson," cries Booth, "you have made me very uneasy, and I must be satisfied."

"Then, sir," said the serjeant, "you shall give me your word of honour, or I will be cut into ten thousand pieces before I will mention another syllable."

"What shall I promise?" said Booth.

"That you will not resent anything I shall lay to the colonel," answered Atkinson.

"Resent! — Well, I give you my honour," said Booth.

The serjeant made him bind himself over and over again, and then related to him the scene which formerly past between the colonel and himself, as far as concerned Booth himself; but concealed all that more immediately related to Amelia.

"Atkinson," cries Booth, "I cannot be angry with you, for I know you love me, and I have many obligations to you; but you have done wrong in censuring the colonel for what he said of me. I deserve all that he said, and his censures proceeded from his friendship."

"But it was not so kind, sir," said Atkinson, "to say such things to me who am but a serjeant, and at such a time too."

"I will hear no more," cries Booth. "Be assured you are the only man I would forgive on this occasion; and I forgive you only on condition you never

Digitized by Google

speak a word more of this nature. This silly dream hath intoxicated you."

"I have done, sir," cries the serjeant. "I know my distance, and whom I am to obey; but I have one favour to beg of your honour, never to mention a word of what I have said to my lady; for I know she never would forgive me; I know she never would, by what my wife hath told me. Besides, you need not mention it, sir, to my lady, for she knows it all already, and a great deal more."

Booth presently parted from the serjeant, having desired him to close his lips on this occasion, and repaired to his wife, to whom he related the serjeant's dream.

Amelia turned as white as snow, and fell into so violent a trembling that Booth plainly perceived her emotion, and immediately partook of it himself. "Sure, my dear," said he, staring wildly, "there is more in this than I know. A silly dream could not so discompose you. I beg you, I intreat you to tell me — hath ever Colonel James — "

At the very mention of the colonel's name Amelia fell on her knees, and begged her husband not to frighten her.

"What do I say, my dear love," cried Booth, "that can frighten you?"

"Nothing, my dear," said she; "but my spirits are so discomposed with the dreadful scene I saw last night, that a dream, which at another time I should have laughed at, hath shocked me. Do but promise me that you will not leave me behind you, and I am easy."

Digitized by Google

"You may be so," cries Booth, "for I will never deny you anything. But make me easy too. I must know if you have seen anything in Colonel James to displease you."

"Why should you suspect it?" cries Amelia.

"You torment me to death," cries Booth. "By Heavens! I will know the truth. Hath he ever said or done anything which you dislike?"

"How, my dear," said Amelia, "can you imagine I should dislike a man who is so much your friend? Think of all the obligations you have to him, and then you may easily resolve yourself. Do you think, because I refuse to stay behind you in his house, that I have any objection to him? No, my dear, had he done a thousand times more than he hath — was he an angel instead of a man, I would not quit my Billy. There 's the sore, my dear — there 's the misery, to be left by you."

Booth embraced her with the most passionate raptures, and, looking on her with inexpressible tenderness, cried, "Upon my soul, I am not worthy of you: I am a fool, and yet you cannot blame me. If the stupid miser hoards, with such care, his worthless treasure — if he watches it with such anxiety — if every apprehension of another's sharing the least part fills his soul with such agonies — O Amelia! what must be my condition, what terrors must I feel, while I am watching over a jewel of such real, such inestimable worth!"

"I can, with great truth, return the compliment," cries Amelia. "I have my treasure too; and am so much a miser, that no force shall ever tear me from it."

Digitized by Google

"I am ashamed of my folly," cries Booth; "and yet it is all from extreme tenderness. Nay, you yourself are the occasion. Why will you ever attempt to keep a secret from me? Do you think I should have resented to my friend his just censure of my conduct?"

"What censure, my dear love?" cries Amelia.

"Nay, the serjeant hath told me all," cries Booth —"nay, and that he hath told it to you. Poor soul! thou couldst not endure to hear me accused, though never so justly, and by so good a friend. Indeed, my dear, I have discovered the cause of that resentment to the colonel which you could not hide from me. I love you, I adore you for it; indeed, I could not forgive a slighting word on you. But, why do I compare things so unlike?—what the colonel said of me was just and true; every reflexion on my Amelia must be false and villanous."

The discernment of Amelia was extremely quick, and she now perceived what had happened, and how much her husband knew of the truth. She resolved therefore to humour him, and fell severely on Colonel James for what he had said to the serjeant, which Booth endeavoured all he could to soften; and thus ended this affair, which had brought Booth to the very brink of a discovery which must have given him the highest torment, if it had not produced any of those tragical effects which Amelia apprehended.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SEVEN

IN WHICH THE AUTHOR APPEARS TO BE MASTER OF THAT PROFOUND LEARNING CALLED THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TOWN.

MRS. JAMES now came to pay a morning's visit to Amelia. She entered the room with her usual gaiety, and after a slight preface, addressing herself to Booth, said she had been quarrelling with her husband on his account. "I know not," said she, "what he means by thinking of sending you the Lord knows whither. I have insisted on his asking something for you nearer home; and it would be the hardest thing in the world if he should not obtain it. Are we resolved never to encourage merit; but to throw away all our preferments on those who do not deserve them? What a set of contemptible wretches do we see strutting about the town in scarlet!"

Booth made a very low bow, and modestly spoke in disparagement of himself. To which she answered, "Indeed, Mr. Booth, you have merit; I have heard it from my brother, who is a judge of those matters, and I am sure cannot be suspected of flattery. He is your friend as well as myself, and we will never let Mr. James rest till he hath got you a commission in England."

Booth bowed again, and was offering to speak, but she interrupted him, saying, "I will have no thanks,

Digitized by Google

nor no fine speeches; if I can do you any service I shall think I am only paying the debt of friendship to my dear Mrs. Booth."

Amelia, who had long since forgot the dislike she had taken to Mrs. James at her first seeing her in town, had attributed it to the right cause, and had begun to resume her former friendship for her, expressed very warm sentiments of gratitude on this occasion. She told Mrs. James she should be eternally obliged to her if she could succeed in her kind endeavours; for that the thoughts of parting again with her husband had given her the utmost concern. "Indeed," added she, "I cannot help saying he hath some merit in the service, for he hath received two dreadful wounds in it, one of which very greatly endangered his life; and I am convinced, if his pretensions were backed with any interest, he would not fail of success."

"They shall be backed with interest," cries Mrs. James, "if my husband hath any. He hath no favour to ask for himself, nor for any other friend that I know of; and, indeed, to grant a man his just due, ought hardly to be thought a favour. Resume your old gaiety, therefore, my dear Emily. Lord! I remember the time when you was much the gayer creature of the two. But you make an arrant mope of yourself by confining yourself at home — one never meets you anywhere. Come, you shall go with me to the Lady Betty Castleton's."

"Indeed, you must excuse me, my dear," answered Amelia, "I do not know Lady Betty."

"Not know Lady Betty! how, is that possible?

Digitized by Google

— but no matter, I will introduce you. She keeps a morning rout; hardly a rout, indeed; a little bit of a drum — only four or five tables. Come, take your capuchine; you positively shall go. Booth, you shall go with us too. Though you are with your wife, another woman will keep you in countenance."

"La! child," cries Amelia, "how you rattle!"

"I am in spirits," answered Mrs. James, "this morning; for I won four rubbers together last night; and betted the things, and won almost every bet. I am in luck, and we will contrive to be partners — Come."

"Nay, child, you shall not refuse Mrs. James," said Booth.

"I have scarce seen my children to-day," answered Amelia. "Besides, I mortally detest cards."

"Detest cards!" cries Mrs. James. "How can you be so stupid? I would not live a day without them — nay, indeed, I do not believe I should be able to exist. Is there so delightful a sight in the world as the four honours in one's own hand, unless it be three natural aces at bragg? — And you really hate cards?"

"Upon reflexion," cries Amelia, "I have sometimes had great pleasure in them — in seeing my children build houses with them. My little boy is so dexterous that he will sometimes build up the whole pack."

"Indeed, Booth," cries Mrs. James, "this good woman of yours is strangely altered since I knew her first; but she will always be a good creature."

"Upon my word, my dear," cries Amelia, "you

Digitized by Google

are altered too very greatly; but I doubt not to live to see you alter again, when you come to have as many children as I have."

"Children!" cries Mrs. James; "you make me shudder. How can you envy me the only circumstance which makes matrimony comfortable?"

"Indeed, my dear," said Amelia, "you injure me; for I envy no woman's happiness in marriage." At these words such looks past between Booth and his wife as, to a sensible by-stander, would have made all the airs of Mrs. James appear in the highest degree contemptible, and would have rendered herself the object of compassion. Nor could that lady avoid looking a little silly on the occasion.

Amelia now, at the earnest desire of her husband, accoutred herself to attend her friend; but first she insisted on visiting her children, to whom she gave several hearty kisses, and then, recommending them to the care of Mrs. Atkinson, she and her husband accompanied Mrs. James to the rout; where few of my fine readers will be displeased to make part of the company.

The two ladies and Booth then entered an apartment beset with card-tables, like the rooms at Bath and Tunbridge. Mrs. James immediately introduced her friends to Lady Betty, who received them very civily, and presently engaged Booth and Mrs. James in a party at whist; for, as to Amelia, she so much declined playing, that as the party could be filled without her, she was permitted to sit by.

And now, who should make his appearance but the noble peer of whom so much honourable mention

Digitized by Google

hath already been made in this history? He walked directly up to Amelia, and addressed her with as perfect a confidence as if he had not been in the least conscious of having in any manner displeased her; though the reader will hardly suppose that Mrs. Ellison had kept anything a secret from him.

Amelia was not, however, so forgetful. She made him a very distant courtesy, would scarce vouchsafe an answer to anything he said, and took the first opportunity of shifting her chair and retiring from him.

Her behaviour, indeed, was such that the peer plainly perceived that he should get no advantage by pursuing her any farther at present. Instead, therefore, of attempting to follow her, he turned on his heel and addressed his discourse to another lady, though he could not avoid often casting his eyes towards Amelia as long as she remained in the room.

Fortune, which seems to have been generally no great friend to Mr. Booth, gave him no extraordinary marks of her favour at play. He lost two full rubbers, which cost him five guineas; after which, Amelia, who was uneasy at his lordship's presence, begged him in a whisper to return home; with which request he directly complied.

Nothing, I think, remarkable happened to Booth, unless the renewal of his acquaintance with an officer whom he had known abroad, and who made one of his party at the whist-table.

The name of this gentleman, with whom the reader will hereafter be better acquainted, was Trent. He had formerly been in the same regiment with Booth,

Digitized by Google

and there was some intimacy between them. Captain Trent exprest great delight in meeting his brother officer, and both mutually promised to visit each other.

The scenes which had past the preceding night and that morning had so confused Amelia's thoughts, that, in the hurry in which she was carried off by Mrs. James, she had entirely forgot her appointment with Dr. Harrison. When she was informed at her return home that the doctor had been to wait upon her, and had expressed some anger at her being gone out, she became greatly uneasy, and begged of her husband to go to the doctor's lodgings and make her apology.

But lest the reader should be as angry with the doctor as he had declared himself with Amelia, we think proper to explain the matter. Nothing then was farther from the doctor's mind than the conception of any anger towards Amelia. On the contrary, when the girl answered him that her mistress was not at home, the doctor said with great good humour, "How! not at home! then tell your mistress she is a giddy vagabond, and I will come to see her no more till she sends for me." This the poor girl, from misunderstanding one word, and half forgetting the rest had construed into great passion, several very bad words, and a declaration that he would never see Amelia any more.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER EIGHT

IN WHICH TWO STRANGERS MAKE THEIR APPEARANCE.

BOOTH went to the doctor's lodgings, and found him engaged with his country friend and his son, a young gentleman who was lately in orders; both whom the doctor had left, to keep his appointment with Amelia.

After what we mentioned at the end of the last chapter, we need take little notice of the apology made by Booth, or the doctor's reception of it, which was in his peculiar manner. "Your wife," said he, "is a vain hussy to think herself worth my anger; but tell her I have the vanity myself to think I cannot be angry without a better cause. And yet tell her I intend to punish her for her levity; for, if you go abroad, I have determined to take her down with me into the country, and make her do penance there till you return."

"Dear sir," said Booth, "I know not how to thank you if you are in earnest."

"I assure you then I am in earnest," cries the doctor; "but you need not thank me, however, since you know not how."

"But would not that, sir," said Booth, "be shewing a slight to the colonel's invitation? and you know I have so many obligations to him."

Digitized by Google

"Don't tell me of the colonel," cries the doctor; "the church is to be first served. Besides, sir, I have priority of right, even to you yourself. You stole my little lamb from me; for I was her first love."

"Well, sir," cries Booth, "if I should be so unhappy to leave her to any one, she must herself determine; and, I believe, it will not be difficult to guess where her choice will fall; for of all men, next to her husband, I believe, none can contend with Dr. Harrison in her favour."

"Since you say so," cries the doctor, "fetch her hither to dinner with us; for I am at least so good a Christian to love those that love me — I will shew you my daughter, my old friend, for I am really proud of her — and you may bring my grand-children with you if you please."

Booth made some compliments, and then went on his errand. As soon as he was gone the old gentleman said to the doctor, "Pray, my good friend, what daughter is this of yours? I never so much as heard that you was married."

"And what then," cries the doctor; "did you ever hear that a pope was married? and yet some of them have had sons and daughters, I believe; but, however, this young gentleman will absolve me without obliging me to penance."

"I have not yet that power," answered the young clergyman; "for I am only in deacon's orders."

"Are you not?" cries the doctor; "why then I will absolve myself. You are to know then, my

Digitized by Google

good friend, that this young lady was the daughter of a neighbour of mine, who is since dead, and whose sins I hope are forgiven; for she had too much to answer for on her child's account. Her father was my intimate acquaintance and friend; a worthier man, indeed, I believe never lived. He died suddenly when his children were infants; and, perhaps, to the suddenness of his death it was owing that he did not recommend any care of them to me. However, I, in some measure, took that charge upon me; and particularly of her whom I call my daughter. Indeed, as she grew up she discovered so many good qualities that she wanted not the remembrance of her father's merit to recommend her. I do her no more than justice when I say she is one of the best creatures I ever knew. She hath a sweetness of temper, a generosity of spirit, an openness of heart — in a word, she hath a true Christian disposition. I may call her an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile."

"I wish you joy of your daughter," cries the old gentleman; "for to a man of your disposition, to find out an adequate object of your benevolence, is, I acknowledge, to find a treasure."

"It is, indeed, a happiness," cries the doctor.

"The greatest difficulty," added the gentleman, "which persons of your turn of mind meet with, is in finding proper objects of their goodness; for nothing sure can be more irksome to a generous mind, than to discover that it hath thrown away all its good offices on a soil that bears no other fruit than ingratitude."

Digitized by Google

"I remember," cries the doctor, "Phocylides saith,

Μὴ κακὸν εὖ ἔρξῃς· σπείρειν ἴσον ἐστ' ἐνὶ πόντῳ.[1]

But he speaks more like a philosopher than a Christian. I am more pleased with a French writer, one of the best, indeed, that I ever read, who blames men for lamenting the ill return which is so often made to the best offices.[2] A true Christian can never be disappointed if he doth not receive his reward in this world; the labourer might as well complain that he is not paid his hire in the middle of the day."

"I own, indeed," said the gentleman, "if we see it in that light —"

"And in what light should we see it?" answered the doctor. "Are we like Agrippa, only almost Christians? or, is Christianity a matter of bare theory, and not a rule for our practice?"

"Practical, undoubtedly; undoubtedly practical," cries the gentleman. "Your example might indeed have convinced me long ago that we ought to do good to every one."

"Pardon me, father," cries the young divine, "that is rather a heathenish than a Christian doctrine. Homer, I remember, introduces in his Iliad, one Axylus, of whom he says —

——— Φίλος δ' ἦν ἀνθρώποισι·
Πάντας γὰρ φιλέεσκεν.[3]

[1] To do a kindness to a bad man is like sowing your seed in the sea.

[2] D'Esprit.

[3] He was a friend to mankind, for he loved them all.

Digitized by Google

But Plato, who, of all the heathens, came nearest to the Christian philosophy, condemned this as impious doctrine; so Eustathius tells us, folio 474."

"I know he doth," cries the doctor, "and so Barnes tells us, in his note upon the place; but if you remember the rest of the quotation as well as you do that from Eustathius, you might have added the observation which Mr. Dryden makes in favour of this passage, that he found not in all the Latin authors, so admirable an instance of extensive humanity. You might have likewise remembered the noble sentiment with which Mr. Barnes ends his note, the sense of which is taken from the fifth chapter of Matthew: —

——ὅς καὶ φάος ἠελίοιο
Μίγδ' ἀγαθοῖσι κακοῖσί τ' ἐπ' ἀνδράσιν ἐξανατέλλει.

"It seems, therefore, as if this character rather became a Christian than a heathen, for Homer could not have transcribed it from any of his deities. Whom is it, therefore, we imitate by such extensive benevolence?"

"What a prodigious memory you have!" cries the old gentleman: "indeed, son, you must not contend with the doctor in these matters."

"I shall not give my opinion hastily," cries the son. "I know, again, what Mr. Poole, in his annotations, says on that verse of St. Matthew — That it is only to *heap coals of fire upon their heads.* How are we to understand, pray, the text immediately preceding? — *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.*"

Digitized by Google

"You know, I suppose, young gentleman," said the doctor, "how these words are generally understood. The commentator you mention, I think, tells us that love is not here to be taken in the strict sense, so as to signify the complacency of the heart; you may hate your enemies as God's enemies, and seek due revenge of them for his honour; and, for your own sakes too, you may seek moderate satisfaction of them; but then you are to love them with a love consistent with these things; that is to say, in plainer words, you are to love them and hate them, and bless and curse, and do them good and mischief."

"Excellent! admirable!" said the old gentleman; "you have a most inimitable turn to ridicule."

"I do not approve ridicule," said the son, "on such subjects."

"Nor I neither," cries the doctor; "I will give you my opinion, therefore, very seriously. The two verses taken together, contain a very positive precept, delivered in the plainest words, and yet illustrated by the clearest instance in the conduct of the Supreme Being; and lastly, the practice of this precept is most nobly enforced by the reward annexed — *that ye may be the children*, and so forth. No man who understands what it is to love, and to bless, and to do good, can mistake the meaning. But if they required any comment, the Scripture itself affords enow. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing.* They do not, indeed, want the comments of

Digitized by Google

men, who, when they cannot bend their mind to the obedience of Scripture, are desirous to wrest Scripture to a compliance with their own inclinations."

"Most nobly and justly observed," cries the old gentleman. "Indeed, my good friend, you have explained the text with the utmost perspicuity."

"But if this be the meaning," cries the son, "there must be an end of all law and justice, for I do not see how any man can prosecute his enemy in a court of justice."

"Pardon me, sir," cries the doctor. "Indeed, as an enemy merely, and from a spirit of revenge, he cannot, and he ought not to prosecute him; but as an offender against the laws of his country he may, and it is his duty so to do. Is there any spirit of revenge in the magistrates or officers of justice when they punish criminals? Why do such, ordinarily I mean, concern themselves in inflicting punishments, but because it is their duty? and why may not a private man deliver an offender into the hands of justice, from the same laudable motive? Revenge, indeed, of all kinds is strictly prohibited; wherefore, as we are not to execute it with our own hands, so neither are we to make use of the law as the instrument of private malice, and to worry each other with inveteracy and rancour. And where is the great difficulty in obeying this wise, this generous, this noble precept? If revenge be, as a certain divine, not greatly to his honour, calls it, the most luscious morsel the devil ever dropt into the mouth of a sinner, it must be allowed at least to cost us often extremely dear. It is a dainty, if indeed it

Digitized by Google

be one, which we come at with great inquietude, with great difficulty, and with great danger. However pleasant it may be to the palate while we are feeding on it, it is sure to leave a bitter relish behind it; and so far, indeed, it may be called a luscious morsel, that the most greedy appetites are soon glutted, and the most eager longing for it is soon turned into loathing and repentance. I allow there is something tempting in its outward appearance, but it is like the beautiful colour of some poisons, from which, however they may attract our eyes, a regard to our own welfare commands us to abstain. And this is an abstinence to which wisdom alone, without any Divine command, hath been often found adequate, with instances of which the Greek and Latin authors everywhere abound. May not a Christian, therefore, be well ashamed of making a stumbling-block of a precept, which is not only consistent with his worldly interest, but to which so noble an incentive is proposed?"

The old gentleman fell into raptures at this speech, and, after making many compliments to the doctor upon it, he turned to his son, and told him he had an opportunity now of learning more in one day than he had learnt at the university in a twelvemonth.

The son replied, that he allowed the doctrine to be extremely good in general, and that he agreed with the greater part; "but I must make a distinction," said he. However, he was interrupted from his distinction at present, for now Booth returned with Amelia and the children.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER NINE

A SCENE OF MODERN WIT AND HUMOUR.

IN the afternoon the old gentleman proposed a walk to Vauxhall, a place of which, he said, he had heard much, but had never seen it.

The doctor readily agreed to his friend's proposal, and soon after ordered two coaches to be sent for to carry the whole company. But when the servant was gone for them Booth acquainted the doctor that it was yet too early. "Is it so?" said the doctor; "why, then, I will carry you first to one of the greatest and highest entertainments in the world."

The children pricked up their ears at this, nor did any of the company guess what he meant; and Amelia asked what entertainment he could carry them to at that time of day?

"Suppose," says the doctor, "I should carry you to court."

"At five o'clock in the afternoon!" cries Booth.

"Ay, suppose I should have interest enough to introduce you into the presence."

"You are jesting, dear sir," cries Amelia.

"Indeed, I am serious," answered the doctor. "I will introduce you into that presence, compared to whom the greatest emperor on the earth is many

Digitized by Google

millions of degrees meaner than the most contemptible reptile is to him. What entertainment can there be to a rational being equal to this? Was not the taste of mankind most wretchedly depraved, where would the vain man find an honour, or where would the love of pleasure propose so adequate an object as divine worship? with what ecstasy must the contemplation of being admitted to such a presence fill the mind! The pitiful courts of princes are open to few, and to those only at particular seasons; but from this glorious and gracious presence we are none of us, and at no time excluded."

The doctor was proceeding thus when the servant returned, saying the coaches were ready; and the whole company with the greatest alacrity attended the doctor to St. James's church.

When the service was ended, and they were again got into their coaches, Amelia returned the doctor many thanks for the light in which he had placed divine worship, assuring him that she had never before had so much transport in her devotion as at this time, and saying she believed she should be the better for this notion he had given her as long as she lived.

The coaches being come to the water-side, they all alighted, and, getting into one boat, proceeded to Vauxhall.

The extreme beauty and elegance of this place is well known to almost every one of my readers; and happy is it for me that it is so, since to give an adequate idea of it would exceed my power of description. To delineate the particular beauties of

Digitized by Google

these gardens would, indeed, require as much pains, and as much paper too, as to rehearse all the good actions of their master, whose life proves the truth of an observation which I have read in some ethic writer, that a truly elegant taste is generally accompanied with an excellency of heart; or, in other words, that true virtue is, indeed, nothing else but true taste.

Here our company diverted themselves with walking an hour or two before the music began. Of all the seven, Booth alone had ever been here before; so that, to all the rest, the place, with its other charms, had that of novelty. When the music played, Amelia, who stood next to the doctor, said to him in a whisper, "I hope I am not guilty of profaneness; but, in pursuance of that chearful chain of thoughts with which you have inspired me this afternoon, I was just now lost in a reverie, and fancied myself in those blissful mansions which we hope to enjoy hereafter. The delicious sweetness of the place, the enchanting charms of the music, and the satisfaction which appears in every one's countenance, carried my soul almost to heaven in its ideas. I could not have, indeed, imagined there had been anything like this in this world."

The doctor smiled, and said, "You see, dear madam, there may be pleasures of which you could conceive no idea till you actually enjoyed them."

And now the little boy, who had long withstood the attractions of several cheesecakes that passed to and fro, could contain no longer, but asked his mother to give him one, saying, "I am sure my

Digitized by Google

sister would be glad of another, though she is ashamed to ask." The doctor, overhearing the child, proposed that they should all retire to some place where they might sit down and refresh themselves; which they accordingly did. Amelia now missed her husband; but, as she had three men in her company, and one of them was the doctor, she concluded herself and her children to be safe, and doubted not but that Booth would soon find her out.

They now sat down, and the doctor very gallantly desired Amelia to call for what she liked. Upon which the children were supplied with cakes, and some ham and chicken were provided for the rest of the company; with which while they were regaling themselves with the highest satisfaction, two young fellows walking arm-in-arm, came up, and when they came opposite to Amelia they stood still, staring Amelia full in the face, and one of them cried aloud to the other, "D—n me, my lord, if she is not an angel!" — My lord stood still, staring likewise at her, without speaking a word; when two others of the same gang came up, and one of them cried, "Come along, Jack, I have seen her before; but she is too well manned already. Three —— are enough for one woman, or the devil is in it!"

"D—n me," says he that spoke first, and whom they called Jack, "I will have a brush at her if she belonged to the whole convocation." And so saying, he went up to the young clergyman, and cried, "Doctor, sit up a little, if you please, and don't take up more room in a bed than belongs to you." At

Digitized by Google

which words he gave the young man a push, and seated himself down directly over against Amelia, and, leaning both his elbows on the table, he fixed his eyes on her in a manner with which modesty can neither look nor bear to be looked at.

Amelia seemed greatly shocked at this treatment; upon which the doctor removed her within him, and then, facing the gentleman, asked him what he meant by this rude behaviour? — Upon which my lord stept up and said, "Don't be impertinent, old gentleman. Do you think such fellows as you are to keep, d—n me, such fine wenches, d—n me, to yourselves, d—n me?"

"No, no," cries Jack, "the old gentleman is more reasonable. Here 's the fellow that eats up the tithe-pig. Don't you see how his mouth waters at her? Where 's your slabbering bib?" For, though the gentleman had rightly guessed he was a clergyman, yet he had not any of those insignia on with which it would have been improper to have appeared there.

"Such boys as you," cries the young clergyman, "ought to be well whipped at school, instead of being suffered to become nuisances in society."

"Boys, sir!" says Jack; "I believe I am as good a man as yourself, Mr. ——, and as good a scholar too. *Bos fur sus quotque sacerdos.* Tell me what 's next. D—n me, I 'll hold you fifty pounds you don't tell me what 's next."

"You have him, Jack," cries my lord. "It is over with him, d—n me! he can't strike another blow."

"If I had you in a proper place," cries the clergy-

Digitized by Google

man, "you should find I would strike a blow, and a pretty hard one too."

"There," cries my lord, "there is the meekness of the clergyman — there spoke the wolf in sheep's clothing. D—n me, how big he looks! You must be civil to him, faith! or else he will burst with pride."

"Ay, ay," cries Jack, "let the clergy alone for pride; there's not a lord in the kingdom now hath half the pride of that fellow."

"Pray, sir," cries the doctor, turning to the other, "are you a lord?"

"Yes, Mr ——," cries he, "I have that honour, indeed."

"And I suppose you have pride too," said the doctor.

"I hope I have, sir," answered he, "at your service."

"If such a one as you, sir," cries the doctor, "who are not only a scandal to the title you bear as a lord, but even as a man, can pretend to pride, why will you not allow it to a clergyman? I suppose, sir, by your dress, you are in the army? and, by the ribbon in your hat, you seem to be proud of that too. How much greater and more honourable is the service in which that gentleman is enlisted than yours! Why then should you object to the pride of the clergy, since the lowest of the function is in reality every way so much your superior?"

"Tida Tidu Tidum," cries my lord.

"However, gentlemen," cries the doctor, "if you have the least pretension to that name, I beg you

Digitized by Google

will put an end to your frolic; since you see it gives so much uneasiness to the lady. Nay, I entreat you for your own sakes, for here is one coming who will talk to you in a very different stile from ours."

"One coming!" cries my lord; "what care I who is coming?"

"I suppose it is the devil," cries Jack; "for here are two of his livery servants already."

"Let the devil come as soon as he will," cries my lord; "d—n me if I have not a kiss!"

Amelia now fell a trembling; and her children, perceiving her fright, both hung on her, and began to cry; when Booth and Captain Trent both came up.

Booth, seeing his wife disordered, asked eagerly what was the matter? At the same time the lord and his companion, seeing Captain Trent, whom they well knew, said both together, "What, doth this company belong to you?" When the doctor, with great presence of mind, as he was apprehensive of some fatal consequence if Booth should know what had past, said, "So, Mr. Booth, I am glad you are returned; your poor lady here began to be frighted out of her wits. But now you have him again," said he to Amelia, "I hope you will be easy."

Amelia, frighted as she was, presently took the hint, and greatly chid her husband for leaving her. But the little boy was not so quick-sighted, and cried, "Indeed, papa, those naughty men there have frighted my mamma out of her wits."

"How!" cries Booth, a little moved; "frightened! Hath any one frightened you, my dear?"

Digitized by Google

"No, my love," answered she, "nothing. I know not what the child means. Everything is well now I see you safe."

Trent had been all the while talking aside with the young sparks; and now, addressing himself to Booth, said, "Here hath been some little mistake; I believe my lord mistook Mrs. Booth for some other lady."

"It is impossible," cries my lord, "to know every one. I am sure, if I had known the lady to be a woman of fashion, and an acquaintance of Captain Trent, I should have said nothing disagreeable to her; but, if I have, I ask her pardon, and the company's."

"I am in the dark," cries Booth. "Pray what is all this matter?"

"Nothing of any consequence," cries the doctor, "nor worth your enquiring into. You hear it was a mistake of the person, and I really believe his lordship that all proceeded from his not knowing to whom the lady belonged."

"Come, come," says Trent, "there is nothing in the matter, I assure you. I will tell you the whole another time."

"Very well; since you say so," cries Booth, "I am contented." So ended the affair, and the two sparks made their congee, and sneaked off.

"Now they are gone," said the young gentleman, "I must say I never saw two worse-bred jackanapes, nor fellows that deserved to be kicked more. If I had had them in another place I would have taught them a little more respect to the church."

Digitized by Google

"You took rather a better way," answered the doctor, "to teach them that respect."

Booth now desired his friend Trent to sit down with them, and proposed to call for a fresh bottle of wine; but Amelia's spirits were too much disconcerted to give her any prospect of pleasure that evening. She therefore laid hold of the pretence of her children, for whom she said the hour was already too late; with which the doctor agreed. So they paid their reckoning and departed, leaving to the two rakes the triumph of having totally dissipated the mirth of this little innocent company, who were before enjoying complete satisfaction.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER TEN

A CURIOUS CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE DOCTOR, THE YOUNG CLERGYMAN, AND THE YOUNG CLERGYMAN'S FATHER.

THE next morning, when the doctor and his two friends were at breakfast, the young clergyman, in whose mind the injurious treatment he had received the evening before was very deeply impressed, renewed the conversation on that subject.

"It is a scandal," said he, "to the government, that they do not preserve more respect to the clergy, by punishing all rudeness to them with the utmost severity. It was very justly observed of you, sir," said he to the doctor, "that the lowest clergyman in England is in real dignity superior to the highest nobleman. What then can be so shocking as to see that gown, which ought to entitle us to the veneration of all we meet, treated with contempt and ridicule? Are we not, in fact, embassadors from heaven to the world? and do they not, therefore, in denying us our due respect, deny it in reality to Him that sent us?"

"If that be the case," says the doctor, "it behoves them to look to themselves; for He who sent us is able to exact most severe vengeance for the ill treatment of His ministers."

Digitized by Google

"Very true, sir," cries the young one; "and I heartily hope He will; but those punishments are at too great a distance to infuse terror into wicked minds. The government ought to interfere with its immediate censures. Fines and imprisonments and corporal punishments operate more forcibly on the human mind than all the fears of damnation."

"Do you think so?" cries the doctor; "then I am afraid men are very little in earnest in those fears."

"Most justly observed," says the old gentleman. "Indeed, I am afraid that is too much the case."

"In that," said the son, "the government is to blame. Are not books of infidelity, treating our holy religion as a mere imposture, nay, sometimes as a mere jest, published daily, and spread abroad amongst the people with perfect impunity?"

"You are certainly in the right," says the doctor; "there is a most blameable remissness with regard to these matters; but the whole blame doth not lie there; some little share of the fault is, I am afraid, to be imputed to the clergy themselves."

"Indeed, sir," cries the young one, "I did not expect that charge from a gentleman of your cloth. Do the clergy give any encouragement to such books? Do they not, on the contrary, cry loudly out against the suffering them? This is the invidious aspersion of the laity; and I did not expect to hear it confirmed by one of our own cloth."

"Be not too impatient, young gentleman," said the doctor. "I do not absolutely confirm the charge of the laity; it is much too general and too severe; but even the laity themselves do not attack them in

Digitized by Google

that part to which you have applied your defence. They are not supposed such fools as to attack that religion to which they owe their temporal welfare. They are not taxed with giving any other support to infidelity than what it draws from the ill examples of their lives; I mean of the lives of some of them. Here too the laity carry their censures too far; for there are very few or none of the clergy whose lives, if compared with those of the laity, can be called profligate; but such, indeed, is the perfect purity of our religion, such is the innocence and virtue which it exacts to entitle us to its glorious rewards and to screen us from its dreadful punishments, that he must be a very good man indeed who lives up to it. Thus then these persons argue. This man is educated in a perfect knowledge of religion, is learned in its laws, and is by his profession obliged, in a manner, to have them always before his eyes. The rewards which it promises to the obedience of these laws are so great, and the punishments threatened on disobedience so dreadful, that it is impossible but all men must fearfully fly from the one, and as eagerly pursue the other. If, therefore, such a person lives in direct opposition to, and in a constant breach of, these laws, the inference is obvious. There is a pleasant story in Matthew Paris, which I will tell you as well as I can remember it. Two young gentlemen, I think they were priests, agreed together that whosoever died first should return and acquaint his friend with the secrets of the other world. One of them died soon after, and fulfilled his promise. The whole relation he gave is not very

Digitized by Google

material; but, among other things, he produced one of his hands, which Satan had made use of to write upon, as the moderns do on a card, and had sent his compliments to the priests for the number of souls which the wicked examples of their lives daily sent to hell. This story is the more remarkable as it was written by a priest, and a great favourer of his order."

"Excellent!" cried the old gentleman; "what a memory you have."

"But, sir," cries the young one, "a clergyman is a man as well as another; and, if such perfect purity be expected —"

"I do not expect it," cries the doctor; "and I hope it will not be expected of us. The Scripture itself gives us this hope, where the best of us are said to fall twenty times a-day. But sure we may not allow the practice of any of those grosser crimes which contaminate the whole mind. We may expect an obedience to the ten commandments, and an abstinence from such notorious vices as, in the first place, Avarice, which, indeed, can hardly subsist without the breach of more commandments than one. Indeed, it would be excessive candour to imagine that a man who so visibly sets his whole heart, not only on this world, but on one of the most worthless things in it (for so is money, without regard to its uses), should be, at the same time, laying up his treasure in heaven. Ambition is a second vice of this sort: we are told we cannot serve God and Mammon. I might have applied this to avarice; but I chose rather to mention it here. When

Digitized by Google

we see a man sneaking about in courts and levees, and doing the dirty work of great men, from the hopes of preferment, can we believe that a fellow whom we see to have so many hard task-masters upon earth ever thinks of his Master which is in heaven? Must he not himself think, if ever he reflects at all, that so glorious a Master will disdain and disown a servant who is the dutiful tool of a court-favourite, and employed either as the pimp of his pleasure, or sometimes, perhaps, made a dirty channel to assist in the conveyance of that corruption which is clogging up and destroying the very vitals of his country?

"The last vice which I shall mention is Pride. There is not in the universe a more ridiculous nor a more contemptible animal than a proud clergyman; a turkey-cock or a jackdaw are objects of veneration when compared with him. I don't mean, by Pride, that noble dignity of mind to which goodness can only administer an adequate object, which delights in the testimony of its own conscience, and could not, without the highest agonies, bear its condemnation. By Pride I mean that saucy passion which exults in every little eventual pre-eminence over other men: such are the ordinary gifts of nature, and the paultry presents of fortune, wit, knowledge, birth, strength, beauty, riches, titles, and rank. That passion which is ever aspiring, like a silly child, to look over the heads of all about them; which, while it servilely adheres to the great, flies from the poor, as if afraid of contamination; devouring greedily every murmur of applause and every look of admi-

Digitized by Google

ration; pleased and elated with all kind of respect; and hurt and enflamed with the contempt of the lowest and most despicable of fools, even with such as treated you last night disrespectfully at Vauxhall. Can such a mind as this be fixed on things above? Can such a man reflect that he hath the ineffable honour to be employed in the immediate service of his great Creator? or can he please himself with the heart-warming hope that his ways are acceptable in the sight of that glorious, that incomprehensible Being?"

"Hear, child, hear," cries the old gentleman; "hear, and improve your understanding. Indeed, my good friend, no one retires from you without carrying away some good instructions with him. Learn of the doctor, Tom, and you will be the better man as long as you live."

"Undoubtedly, sir," answered Tom, "the doctor hath spoken a great deal of excellent truth; and, without a compliment to him, I was always a great admirer of his sermons, particularly of their oratory. But,

Nec tamen hoc tribuens dederim quoque cætera.

I cannot agree that a clergyman is obliged to put up with an affront any more than another man, and more especially when it is paid to the order."

"I am very sorry, young gentleman," cries the doctor, "that you should be ever liable to be affronted as a clergyman; and I do assure you, if I had known your disposition formerly, the order should never have been affronted through you."

Digitized by Google

The old gentleman now began to check his son for his opposition to the doctor, when a servant delivered the latter a note from Amelia, which he read immediately to himself, and it contained the following words:

"My dear Sir, — Something hath happened since I saw you which gives me great uneasiness, and I beg the favour of seeing you as soon as possible to advise with you upon it. I am

"Your most obliged and dutiful daughter,

"Amelia Booth."

The doctor's answer was, that he would wait on the lady directly; and then, turning to his friend, he asked him if he would not take a walk in the Park before dinner. "I must go," says he, "to the lady who was with us last night; for I am afraid, by her letter, some bad accident hath happened to her. Come, young gentleman, I spoke a little too hastily to you just now; but I ask your pardon. Some allowance must be made to the warmth of your blood. I hope we shall, in time, both think alike."

The old gentleman made his friend another compliment; and the young one declared he hoped he should always think, and act too, with the dignity becoming his cloth. After which the doctor took his leave for a while, and went to Amelia's lodgings.

As soon as he was gone the old gentleman fell very severely on his son. "Tom," says he, "how can you be such a fool to undo, by your perverseness, all that I have been doing? Why will you not learn to study mankind with the attention which I have employed

Digitized by Google

to that purpose? Do you think, if I had affronted this obstinate old fellow as you do, I should ever have engaged his friendship?"

"I cannot help it, sir," said Tom: "I have not studied six years at the university to give up my sentiments to every one. It is true, indeed, he put together a set of sounding words; but, in the main, I never heard any one talk more foolishly."

"What of that?" cries the father; "I never told you he was a wise man, nor did I ever think him so. If he had any understanding, he would have been a bishop long ago, to my certain knowledge. But, indeed, he hath been always a fool in private life; for I question whether he is worth £100 in the world, more than his annual income. He hath given away above half his fortune to the Lord knows who. I believe I have had above £200 of him, first and last; and would you lose such a milch-cow as this for want of a few compliments? Indeed, Tom, thou art as great a simpleton as himself. How do you expect to rise in the church if you cannot temporise and give in to the opinions of your superiors?"

"I don't know, sir," cries Tom, "what you mean by my superiors. In one sense, I own, a doctor of divinity is superior to a bachelor of arts, and so far I am ready to allow his superiority; but I understand Greek and Hebrew as well as he, and will maintain my opinion against him, or any other in the schools."

"Tom," cries the old gentleman, "till thou gettest the better of thy conceit I shall never have any hopes of thee. If thou art wise, thou wilt think every man thy superior of whom thou canst get anything; at

Digitized by Google

least thou wilt persuade him that thou thinkest so, and that is sufficient. Tom, Tom, thou hast no policy in thee."

"What have I been learning these seven years," answered he, "in the university? However, father, I can account for your opinion. It is the common failing of old men to attribute all wisdom to themselves. Nestor did it long ago: but, if you will inquire my character at college, I fancy you will not think I want to go to school again."

The father and son then went to take their walk, during which the former repeated many good lessons of policy to his son, not greatly perhaps to his edification. In truth, if the old gentleman's fondness had not in a great measure blinded him to the imperfections of his son, he would have soon perceived that he was sowing all his instructions in a soil so choaked with self-conceit that it was utterly impossible they should ever bear any fruit.

Digitized by Google

BOOK X

CHAPTER ONE

TO WHICH WE WILL PREFIX NO PREFACE.

THE doctor found Amelia alone, for Booth was gone to walk with his new-revived acquaintance, Captain Trent, who seemed so pleased with the renewal of his intercourse with his old brother-officer, that he had been almost continually with him from the time of their meeting at the drum.

Amelia acquainted the doctor with the purport of her message, as follows: "I ask your pardon, my dear sir, for troubling you so often with my affairs; but I know your extreme readiness, as well as ability, to assist any one with your advice. The fact is, that my husband hath been presented by Colonel James with two tickets for a masquerade, which is to be in a day or two, and he insists so strongly on my going with him, that I really do not know how to refuse without giving him some reason; and I am not able to invent any other than the true one, which you would not, I am sure, advise me to communicate to him. Indeed I had a most narrow escape the other day; for I was almost drawn in inadvertently by a very strange accident, to acquaint

Digitized by Google

him with the whole matter." She then related the serjeant's dream, with all the consequences that attended it.

The doctor considered a little with himself, and then said, "I am really, child, puzzled as well as you about this matter. I would by no means have you go to the masquerade; I do not indeed like the diversion itself, as I have heard it described to me; not that I am such a prude to suspect every woman who goes there of any evil intentions; but it is a pleasure of too loose and disorderly a kind for the recreation of a sober mind. Indeed, you have still a stronger and more particular objection. I will try myself to reason him out of it."

"Indeed it is impossible," answered she; "and therefore I would not set you about it. I never saw him more set on anything. There is a party, as they call it, made on the occasion; and he tells me my refusal will disappoint all."

"I really do not know what to advise you," cries the doctor; "I have told you I do not approve of these diversions; but yet, as your husband is so very desirous, I cannot think there will be any harm in going with him. However, I will consider of it, and do all in my power for you."

Here Mrs. Atkinson came in, and the discourse on this subject ceased; but soon after Amelia renewed it, saying there was no occasion to keep anything a secret from her friend. They then fell to debating on the subject, but could not come to any resolution. But Mrs. Atkinson, who was in an unusual flow of spirits, cried out, "Fear nothing, my dear

Digitized by Google

Amelia, two women surely will be too hard for one man. I think, doctor, it exceeds Virgil:

Una dolo divûm si fœmina victa duorum est."

"Very well repeated, indeed!" cries the doctor. "Do you understand all Virgil as well as you seem to do that line?"

"I hope I do, sir," said she, "and Horace too; or else my father threw away his time to very little purpose in teaching me."

"I ask your pardon, madam," cries the doctor. "I own it was an impertinent question."

"Not at all, sir," says she; "and if you are one of those who imagine women incapable of learning, I shall not be offended at it. I know the common opinion; but

Interdum vulgus rectum videt, est ubi peccat."

"If I was to profess such an opinion, madam," said the doctor, "Madam Dacier and yourself would bear testimony against me. The utmost indeed that I should venture would be to question the utility of learning in a young lady's education."

"I own," said Mrs. Atkinson, "as the world is constituted, it cannot be as serviceable to her fortune as it will be that of a man; but you will allow, doctor, that learning may afford a woman, at least, a reasonable and an innocent entertainment."

"But I will suppose," cried the doctor, "it may have its inconveniences. As, for instance, if a learned lady should meet with an unlearned husband, might she not be apt to despise him?"

Digitized by Google

"I think not," cries Mrs. Atkinson — "and, if I may be allowed the instance, I think I have shewn, myself, that women who have learning themselves can be contented without that qualification in a man."

"To be sure," cries the doctor, "there may be other qualifications which may have their weight in the balance. But let us take the other side of the question, and suppose the learned of both sexes to meet in the matrimonial union, may it not afford one excellent subject of disputation, which is the most learned?"

"Not at all," cries Mrs. Atkinson; "for, if they had both learning and good sense, they would soon see on which side the superiority lay."

"But if the learned man," said the doctor, "should be a little unreasonable in his opinion, are you sure that the learned woman would preserve her duty to her husband, and submit?"

"But why," cries Mrs. Atkinson, "must we necessarily suppose that a learned man would be unreasonable?"

"Nay, madam," said the doctor, "I am not your husband; and you shall not hinder me from supposing what I please. Surely it is not such a paradox to conceive that a man of learning should be unreasonable. Are there no unreasonable opinions in very learned authors, even among the critics themselves? For instance, what can be a more strange, and indeed unreasonable opinion, than to prefer the Metamorphoses of Ovid to the Æneid of Virgil?"

"It would be indeed so strange," cries the lady,

Digitized by Google

"that you shall not persuade me it was ever the opinion of any man."

"Perhaps not," cries the doctor; "and I believe you and I should not differ in our judgments of any person who maintained such an opinion — What a taste must he have!"

"A most contemptible one indeed," cries Mrs. Atkinson.

"I am satisfied," cries the doctor. "And in the words of your own Horace, *Verbum non amplius addam.*"

"But how provoking is this," cries Mrs. Atkinson, "to draw one in such a manner! I protest I was so warm in the defence of my favourite Virgil, that I was not aware of your design; but all your triumph depends on a supposition that one should be so unfortunate as to meet with the silliest fellow in the world."

"Not in the least," cries the doctor. "Doctor Bentley was not such a person; and yet he would have quarrelled, I am convinced, with any wife in the world, in behalf of one of his corrections. I don't suppose he would have given up his *Ingentia Fata* to an angel."

"But do you think," said she, "if I had loved him, I would have contended with him?"

"Perhaps you might sometimes," said the doctor, "be of these sentiments; but you remember your own Virgil — *Varium et mutabile semper fœmina.*"

"Nay, Amelia," said Mrs. Atkinson, "you are now concerned as well as I am; for he hath now abused the whole sex, and quoted the severest thing

Digitized by Google

that ever was said against us, though I allow it is one of the finest."

"With all my heart, my dear," cries Amelia. "I have the advantage of you, however, for I don't understand him."

"Nor doth she understand much better than yourself," cries the doctor; "or she would not admire nonsense, even though in Virgil."

"Pardon me, sir," said she.

"And pardon me, madam," cries the doctor, with a feigned seriousness; "I say, a boy in the fourth form at Eton would be whipt, or would deserve to be whipt at least, who made the neuter gender agree with the feminine. You have heard, however, that Virgil left his Æneid incorrect; and, perhaps, had he lived to correct it, we should not have seen the faults we now see in it."

"Why, it is very true as you say, doctor," cries Mrs. Atkinson; "there seems to be a false concord. I protest I never thought of it before."

"And yet this is the Virgil," answered the doctor, "that you are so fond of, who hath made you all of the neuter gender; or, as we say in English, he hath made mere animals of you; for, if we translate it thus,

Woman is a various and changeable animal,

there will be no fault, I believe, unless in point of civility to the ladies."

Mrs. Atkinson had just time to tell the doctor he was a provoking creature, before the arrival of Booth and his friend put an end to that learned discourse, in which neither of the parties had greatly recom-

Digitized by Google

mended themselves to each other; the doctor's opinion of the lady being not at all heightened by her progress in the classics, and she, on the other hand, having conceived a great dislike in her heart towards the doctor, which would have raged, perhaps, with no less fury from the consideration that he had been her husband.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE MASQUERADE.

FROM this time to the day of the masquerade nothing happened of consequence enough to have a place in this history. On that day Colonel James came to Booth's about nine in the evening, where he stayed for Mrs. James, who did not come till near eleven. The four masques then set out together in several chairs, and all proceeded to the Haymarket.

When they arrived at the Opera-house the colonel and Mrs. James presently left them; nor did Booth and his lady remain long together, but were soon divided from each other by different masques.

A domino soon accosted the lady, and had her away to the upper end of the farthest room on the right hand, where both the masques sat down; nor was it long before the he domino began to make very fervent love to the she. It would, perhaps, be tedious to the reader to run through the whole process, which was not indeed in the most romantick stile. The lover seemed to consider his mistress as a mere woman of this world, and seemed rather to apply to her avarice and ambition than to her softer passions.

As he was not so careful to conceal his true voice as the lady was, she soon discovered that this lover of

Digitized by Google

her's was no other than her old friend the peer, and presently a thought suggested itself to her of making an advantage of this accident. She gave him therefore an intimation that she knew him, and expressed some astonishment at his having found her out. "I suspect," says she, "my lord, that you have a friend in the woman where I now lodge, as well as you had in Mrs. Ellison." My lord protested the contrary. To which she answered, "Nay, my lord, do not defend her so earnestly till you are sure I should have been angry with her."

At these words, which were accompanied with a very bewitching softness, my lord flew into raptures rather too strong for the place he was in. These the lady gently checked, and begged him to take care they were not observed; for that her husband, for aught she knew, was then in the room.

Colonel James came now up, and said, "So, madam, I have the good fortune to find you again; I have been extremely miserable since I lost you." The lady answered in her masquerade voice that she did not know him. "I am Colonel James," said he, in a whisper. "Indeed, sir," answered she, "you are mistaken; I have no acquaintance with any Colonel James." "Madam," answered he, in a whisper likewise, "I am positive I am not mistaken, you are certainly Mrs. Booth." "Indeed, sir," said she, "you are very impertinent, and I beg you will leave me." My lord then interposed, and, speaking in his own voice, assured the colonel that the lady was a woman of quality, and that they were engaged in a conversation together; upon which the colonel

Digitized by Google

asked the lady's pardon; for, as there was nothing remarkable in her dress, he really believed he had been mistaken.

He then went again a hunting through the rooms, and soon after found Booth walking without his mask between two ladies, one of whom was in a blue domino, and the other in the dress of a shepherdess. "Will," cries the colonel, "do you know what is become of our wives; for I have seen neither of them since we have been in the room?" Booth answered, "That he supposed they were both together, and they should find them by and by." "What!" cries the lady in the blue domino, "are you both come upon duty then with your wives? as for yours, Mr. Alderman," said she to the colonel, "I make no question but she is got into much better company than her husband's." "How can you be so cruel, madam?" said the shepherdess; "you will make him beat his wife by and by, for he is a military man I assure you." "In the trained bands, I presume," cries the domino, "for he is plainly dated from the city." "I own, indeed," cries the other, "the gentleman smells strongly of Thames-street, and, if I may venture to guess, of the honourable calling of a taylor."

"Why, what the devil hast thou picked up here?" cries James.

"Upon my soul, I don't know," answered Booth; "I wish you would take one of them at least."

"What say you, madam?" cries the domino, "will you go with the colonel? I assure you, you have mistaken your man, for he is no less a person than the great Colonel James himself."

Digitized by Google

"No wonder, then, that Mr. Booth gives him his choice of us; it is the proper office of a caterer, in which capacity Mr. Booth hath, I am told, the honour to serve the noble colonel."

"Much good may it do you with your ladies!" said James; "I will go in pursuit of better game." At which words he walked off.

"You are a true sportsman," cries the shepherdess; "for your only pleasure, I believe, lies in the pursuit."

"Do you know the gentleman, madam?" cries the domino.

"Who doth not know him?" answered the shepherdess.

"What is his character?" cries the domino; "for, though I have jested with him, I only know him by sight."

"I know nothing very particular in his character," cries the shepherdess. "He gets every handsome woman he can, and so they do all."

"I suppose then he is not married?" said the domino.

"O yes! and married for love too," answered the other; "but he hath loved away all his love for her long ago, and now, he says, she makes as fine an object of hatred. I think, if the fellow ever appears to have any wit, it is when he abuses his wife; and, luckily for him, that is his favourite topic. I don't know the poor wretch, but, as he describes her, it is a miserable animal."

"I know her very well," cries the other; "and I am much mistaken if she is not even with him; but hang him! what is become of Booth?"

Digitized by Google

At this instant a great noise arose near that part where the two ladies were. This was occasioned by a large assembly of young fellows whom they call bucks, who were got together, and were enjoying, as the phrase is, a letter, which one of them had found in the room.

Curiosity hath its votaries among all ranks of people; whenever therefore an object of this appears it is as sure of attracting a croud in the assemblies of the polite as in those of their inferiors.

When this croud was gathered together, one of the bucks, at the desire of his companions, as well as of all present, performed the part of a public orator, and read out the following letter, which we shall give the reader, together with the comments of the orator himself, and of all his audience.

The orator then, being mounted on a bench, began as follows:

"Here beginneth the first chapter of —— saint — Pox on't, Jack, what is the saint's name? I have forgot."

"Timothy, you blockhead," answered another; "— Timothy."

"Well, then," cries the orator, "of Saint Timothy.

"'Sir,—I am very sorry to have any occasion of writing on the following subject in a country that is honoured with the name of Christian; much more am I concerned to address myself to a man whose many advantages, derived both from nature and fortune, should demand the highest return of gratitude to the great Giver of all those good things. Is not such a man guilty of the highest ingratitude to that

Digitized by Google

most beneficent Being, by a direct and avowed disobedience of his most positive laws and commands?

"'I need not tell you that adultery is forbid in the laws of the decalogue; nor need I, I hope, mention that it is expressly forbid in the New Testament.'

"You see, therefore," said the orator, "what the law is, and therefore none of you will be able to plead ignorance when you come to the Old Bailey in the other world. But here goes again:—

"'If it had not been so expressly forbidden in Scripture, still the law of Nature would have yielded light enough for us to have discovered the great horror and atrociousness of this crime.

"'And accordingly we find that nations, where the Sun of righteousness hath yet never shined, have punished the adulterer with the most exemplary pains and penalties; not only the polite heathens, but the most barbarous nations, have concurred in these; in many places the most severe and shameful corporal punishments, and in some, and those not a few, death itself hath been inflicted on this crime.

"'And sure in a human sense there is scarce any guilt which deserves to be more severely punished. It includes in it almost every injury and every mischief which one man can do to, or can bring on, another. It is robbing him of his property—'

"Mind that, ladies," said the orator; "you are all the property of your husbands.——'And of that property which, if he is a good man, he values above all others. It is poisoning that fountain whence he hath a right to derive the sweetest and most innocent pleasure, the most cordial comfort,

Digitized by Google

the most solid friendship, and most faithful assistance in all his affairs, wants, and distresses. It is the destruction of his peace of mind, and even of his reputation. The ruin of both wife and husband, and sometimes of the whole family, are the probable consequence of this fatal injury. Domestic happiness is the end of almost all our pursuits, and the common reward of all our pains. When men find themselves for ever barred from this delightful fruition, they are lost to all industry, and grow careless of all their worldly affairs. Thus they become bad subjects, bad relations, bad friends, and bad men. Hatred and revenge are the wretched passions which boil in their minds. Despair and madness very commonly ensue, and murder and suicide often close the dreadful scene.'

"Thus, gentlemen and ladies, you see the scene is closed. So here ends the first act — and thus begins the second: —

"'I have here attempted to lay before you a picture of this vice, the horror of which no colours of mine can exaggerate. But what pencil can delineate the horrors of that punishment which the Scripture denounces against it?

"'And for what will you subject yourself to this punishment? or for what reward will you inflict all this misery on another? I will add, on your friend? for the possession of a woman; for the pleasure of a moment? But, if neither virtue nor religion can restrain your inordinate appetites, are there not many women as handsome as your friend's wife, whom, though not with innocence, you may possess with a

Digitized by Google

much less degree of guilt? What motive then can thus hurry you on to the destruction of yourself and your friend? doth the peculiar rankness of the guilt add any zest to the sin? doth it enhance the pleasure as much as we may be assured it will the punishment?

"'But if you can be so lost to all sense of fear, and of shame, and of goodness, as not to be debarred by the evil which you are to bring on yourself, by the extreme baseness of the action, nor by the ruin in which you are to involve others, let me still urge the difficulty, I may say, the impossibility of the success. You are attacking a fortress on a rock; a chastity so strongly defended, as well by a happy natural disposition of mind as by the strongest principles of religion and virtue, implanted by education and nourished and improved by habit, that the woman must be invincible even without that firm and constant affection of her husband which would guard a much looser and worse-disposed heart. What therefore are you attempting but to introduce distrust, and perhaps disunion, between an innocent and a happy couple, in which too you cannot succeed without bringing, I am convinced, certain destruction on your own head?

"'Desist, therefore, let me advise you, from this enormous crime; retreat from the vain attempt of climbing a precipice which it is impossible you should ever ascend, where you must probably soon fall into utter perdition, and can have no other hope but of dragging down your best friend into perdition with you.

Digitized by Google

"'I can think of but one argument more, and that, indeed, a very bad one; you throw away that time in an impossible attempt, which might, in other places, crown your sinful endeavours with success.'

"And so ends the dismal ditty."

"D—n me," cries one, "did ever mortal hear such d—ned stuff?"

"Upon my soul," said another, "I like the last argument well enough. There is some sense in that; for d—n me if I had not rather go to D—g—ss at any time than follow a virtuous b—— for a fortnight."

"Tom," says one of them, "let us set the ditty to music; let us subscribe to have it set by Handel; it will make an excellent oratorio."

"D—n me, Jack," says another, "we 'll have it set to a psalm-tune, and we 'll sing it next Sunday at St. James's church, and I 'll bear a bob, d—n me."

"Fie upon it! gentlemen, fie upon it!" said a frier, who came up; "do you think there is any wit and humour in this ribaldry; or, if there were, would it make any atonement for abusing religion and virtue?"

"Heyday!" cries one, "this is a frier in good earnest."

"Whatever I am," said the frier, "I hope at least you are what you appear to be. Heaven forbid, for the sake of our posterity, that you should be gentlemen."

"Jack," cries one, "let us toss the frier in a blanket."

"Me in a blanket?" said the frier: "by the dig-

Digitized by Google

nity of man, I will twist the neck of every one of you as sure as ever the neck of a dunghill-cock was twisted." At which words he pulled off his mask, and the tremendous majesty of Colonel Bath appeared, from which the bucks fled away as fast as the Trojans heretofore from the face of Achilles. The colonel did not think it worth while to pursue any other of them except him who had the letter in his hand, which the colonel desired to see, and the other delivered, saying it was very much at his service.

The colonel being possessed of the letter, retired as privately as he could, in order to give it a careful perusal; for, badly as it had been read by the orator, there were some passages in it which had pleased the colonel. He had just gone through it when Booth passed by him; upon which the colonel called to him, and, delivering him the letter, bid him put it in his pocket and read it at his leisure. He made many encomiums upon it, and told Booth it would be of service to him, and was proper for all young men to read.

Booth had not yet seen his wife; but, as he concluded she was safe with Mrs. James, he was not uneasy. He had been prevented searching farther after her by the lady in the blue domino, who had joined him again. Booth had now made these discoveries: that the lady was pretty well acquainted with him, that she was a woman of fashion, and that she had a particular regard for him. But, though he was a gay man, he was in reality so fond of his Amelia, that he thought of no other woman; wherefore,

Digitized by Google

though not absolutely a Joseph, as we have already seen, yet could he not be guilty of premeditated inconstancy. He was indeed so very cold and insensible to the hints which were given him, that the lady began to complain of his dullness. When the shepherdess again came up and heard this accusation against him, she confirmed it, saying, "I do assure you, madam, he is the dullest fellow in the world. Indeed, I should almost take you for his wife, by finding you a second time with him; for I do assure you the gentleman very seldom keeps any other company." "Are you so well acquainted with him, madam?" said the domino. "I have had that honour longer than your ladyship, I believe," answered the shepherdess. "Possibly you may, madam," cries the domino; "but I wish you would not interrupt us at present, for we have some business together." "I believe, madam," answered the shepherdess, "my business with the gentleman is altogether as important as yours; and therefore your ladyship may withdraw if you please." "My dear ladies," cries Booth, "I beg you will not quarrel about me." "Not at all," answered the domino; "since you are so indifferent, I resign my pretensions with all my heart. If you had not been the dullest fellow upon earth, I am convinced you must have discovered me." She then went off, muttering to herself that she was satisfied the shepherdess was some wretched creature whom nobody knew.

The shepherdess overheard the sarcasm, and answered it by asking Booth what contemptible wretch he had picked up? "Indeed, madam," said he, "you

Digitized by Google

know as much of her as I do; she is a masquerade acquaintance like yourself." "Like me!" repeated she. "Do you think if this had been our first acquaintance I should have wasted so much time with you as I have? for your part, indeed, I believe a woman will get very little advantage by her having been formerly intimate with you." "I do not know, madam," said Booth, "that I deserve that character any more than I know the person that now gives it me." "And you have the assurance then," said she, in her own voice, "to affect not to remember me?" "I think," cries Booth, "I have heard that voice before; but, upon my soul, I do not recollect it." "Do you recollect," said she, "no woman that you have used with the highest barbarity — I will not say ingratitude?" "No, upon my honour," answered Booth. "Mention not honour," said she, "thou wretch! for, hardened as thou art, I could shew thee a face that, in spite of thy consummate impudence, would confound thee with shame and horrour. Dost thou not yet know me?" "I do, madam, indeed," answered Booth, "and I confess that of all women in the world you have the most reason for what you said."

Here a long dialogue ensued between the gentleman and the lady, whom, I suppose, I need not mention to have been Miss Matthews; but, as it consisted chiefly of violent upbraidings on her side, and excuses on his, I despair of making it entertaining to the reader, and shall therefore return to the colonel, who, having searched all the rooms with the utmost diligence, without finding the woman he looked for, began to suspect that he had before fixed on the right person,

Digitized by Google

and that Amelia had denied herself to him, being pleased with her paramour, whom he had discovered to be the noble peer.

He resolved, therefore, as he could have no sport himself, to spoil that of others; accordingly he found out Booth, and asked him again what was become of both their wives; for that he had searched all over the rooms, and could find neither of them.

Booth was now a little alarmed at this account, and, parting with Miss Matthews, went along with the colonel in search of his wife. As for Miss Matthews, he had at length pacified her with a promise to make her a visit; which promise she extorted from him, swearing bitterly, in the most solemn manner, unless he made it to her, she would expose both him and herself at the masquerade.

As he knew the violence of the lady's passions, and to what heights they were capable of rising, he was obliged to come in to these terms: for he had, I am convinced, no fear upon earth equal to that of Amelia's knowing what it was in the power of Miss Matthews to communicate to her, and which to conceal from her, he had already undergone so much uneasiness.

The colonel led Booth directly to the place where he had seen the peer and Amelia (such he was now well convinced she was) sitting together. Booth no sooner saw her than he said to the colonel, "Sure that is my wife in conversation with that masque?" "I took her for your lady myself," said the colonel; "but I found I was mistaken. Hark ye, that is my Lord ——, and I have seen that very lady with him all this night."

Digitized by Google

This conversation past at a little distance, and out of the hearing of the supposed Amelia; when Booth, looking stedfastly at the lady, declared with an oath that he was positive the colonel was in the right. She then beckoned to him with her fan; upon which he went directly to her, and she asked him to go home, which he very readily consented to. The peer then walked off: the colonel went in pursuit of his wife, or of some other woman; and Booth and his lady returned in two chairs to their lodgings.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER THREE

CONSEQUENCES OF THE MASQUERADE, NOT UNCOMMON NOR SURPRIZING.

THE lady, getting first out of her chair, ran hastily up into the nursery to the children; for such was Amelia's constant method at her return home, at whatever hour. Booth then walked into the dining-room, where he had not been long before Amelia came down to him, and, with a most chearful countenance, said, "My dear, I fancy we have neither of us supped; shall I go down and see whether there is any cold meat in the house?"

"For yourself, if you please," answered Booth; "but I shall eat nothing."

"How, my dear!" said Amelia; "I hope you have not lost your appetite at the masquerade!" for supper was a meal at which he generally eat very heartily.

"I know not well what I have lost," said Booth; "I find myself disordered. — My head aches. I know not what is the matter with me."

"Indeed, my dear, you frighten me," said Amelia; "you look, indeed, disordered. I wish the masquerade had been far enough before you had gone thither."

"Would to Heaven it had!" cries Booth; "but that is over now. But pray, Amelia, answer me one question — Who was that gentleman with you when I came up to you?"

Digitized by Google

"The gentleman! my dear," said Amelia; "what gentleman?"

"The gentleman — the nobleman — when I came up; sure I speak plain."

"Upon my word, my dear, I don't understand you," answered she; "I did not know one person at the masquerade."

"How!" said he; "what! spend the whole evening with a masque without knowing him?"

"Why, my dear," said she, "you know we were not together."

"I know we were not," said he, "but what is that to the purpose? Sure you answer me strangely. I know we were not together; and therefore I ask you whom you were with?"

"Nay, but, my dear," said she, "can I tell people in masques?"

"I say again, madam," said he, "would you converse two hours or more with a masque whom you did not know?"

"Indeed, child," says she, "I know nothing of the methods of a masquerade; for I never was at one in my life."

"I wish to Heaven you had not been at this!" cries Booth. "Nay, you will wish so yourself if you tell me truth. — What have I said? do I — can I suspect you of not speaking truth? Since you are ignorant then I will inform you: the man you have conversed with was no other than Lord ——"

"And is that the reason," said she, "you wish I had not been there?"

"And is not that reason," answered he, "suffi-

cient? Is he not the last man upon earth with whom I would have you converse?"

"So you really wish then that I had not been at the masquerade?"

"I do," cried he, "from my soul."

"So may I ever be able," cried she, "to indulge you in every wish as in this.—I was not there."

"Do not trifle, Amelia," cried he; "you would not jest with me if you knew the situation of my mind."

"Indeed I do not jest with you," said she. "Upon my honour I was not there. Forgive me this first deceit I ever practised, and indeed it shall be the last; for I have paid severely for this by the uneasiness it hath given me." She then revealed to him the whole secret, which was thus:

I think it hath been already mentioned in some part of this history that Amelia and Mrs. Atkinson were exactly of the same make and stature, and that there was likewise a very near resemblance between their voices. When Mrs. Atkinson, therefore, found that Amelia was so extremely averse to the masquerade, she proposed to go thither in her stead, and to pass upon Booth for his own wife.

This was afterwards very easily executed; for, when they left Booth's lodgings, Amelia, who went last to her chair, ran back to fetch her masque, as she pretended, which she had purposely left behind. She then whipt off her domino, and threw it over Mrs. Atkinson, who stood ready to receive it, and ran immediately down-stairs, and, stepping into Amelia's chair, proceeded with the rest to the masquerade.

Digitized by Google

As her stature exactly suited that of Amelia, she had very little difficulty to carry on the imposition; for, besides the natural resemblance of their voices, and the opportunity of speaking in a feigned one, she had scarce an intercourse of six words with Booth during the whole time; for the moment they got into the croud she took the first opportunity of slipping from him. And he, as the reader may remember, being seized by other women, and concluding his wife to be safe with Mrs. James, was very well satisfied, till the colonel set him upon the search, as we have seen before.

Mrs. Atkinson, the moment she came home, ran up-stairs to the nursery, where she found Amelia, and told her in haste that she might very easily carry on the deceit with her husband; or that she might tell him what she pleased to invent, as they had not been a minute together during the whole evening.

Booth was no sooner satisfied that his wife had not been from home that evening than he fell into raptures with her, gave her a thousand tender caresses, blamed his own judgment, acknowledged the goodness of hers, and vowed never to oppose her will more in any one instance during his life.

Mrs. Atkinson, who was still in the nursery with her masquerade dress, was then summoned down-stairs, and, when Booth saw her and heard her speak in her mimic tone, he declared he was not surprized at his having been imposed upon, for that, if they were both in the same disguise, he should

Digitized by Google

scarce be able to discover the difference between them.

They then sat down to half an hour's chearful conversation, after which they retired all in the most perfect good humour.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FOUR

CONSEQUENCES OF THE MASQUERADE.

WHEN Booth rose in the morning he found in his pocket that letter which had been delivered to him by Colonel Bath, which, had not chance brought to his remembrance, he might possibly have never recollected.

He had now, however, the curiosity to open the letter, and beginning to read it, the matter of it drew him on till he perused the whole; for, notwithstanding the contempt cast upon it by those learned critics the bucks, neither the subject nor the manner in which it was treated was altogether contemptible.

But there was still another motive which induced Booth to read the whole letter, and this was, that he presently thought he knew the hand. He did, indeed, immediately conclude it was Dr. Harrison; for the doctor wrote a very remarkable one, and this letter contained all the particularities of the doctor's character.

He had just finished a second reading of this letter when the doctor himself entered the room. The good man was impatient to know the success of Amelia's stratagem, for he bore towards her all that love which esteem can create in a good mind, with-

Digitized by Google

out the assistance of those selfish considerations from which the love of wives and children may be ordinarily deduced. The latter of which, Nature, by very subtle and refined reasoning, suggests to us to be part of our dear selves; and the former, as long as they remain the objects of our liking, that same Nature is furnished with very plain and fertile arguments to recommend to our affections. But to raise that affection in the human breast which the doctor had for Amelia, Nature is forced to use a kind of logic which is no more understood by a bad man than Sir Isaac Newton's doctrine of colours is by one born blind. And yet in reality it contains nothing more abstruse than this, that an injury is the object of anger, danger of fear, and praise of vanity; for in the same simple manner it may be asserted that goodness is the object of love.

The doctor enquired immediately for his child (for so he often called Amelia); Booth answered that he had left her asleep, for that she had had but a restless night. "I hope she is not disordered by the masquerade," cries the doctor. Booth answered he believed she would be very well when she waked. "I fancy," said he, "her gentle spirits were a little too much fluttered last night; that is all."

"I hope, then," said the doctor, "you will never more insist on her going to such places, but know your own happiness in having a wife that hath the discretion to avoid those places; which, though perhaps they may not be as some represent them, such brothels of vice and debauchery as would impeach the character of every virtuous woman who was seen

Digitized by Google

at them, are certainly, however, scenes of riot, disorder, and intemperance, very improper to be frequented by a chaste and sober Christian matron."

Booth declared that he was very sensible of his error, and that, so far from soliciting his wife to go to another masquerade, he did not intend ever to go thither any more himself.

The doctor highly approved the resolution; and then Booth said, "And I thank you, my dear friend, as well as my wife's discretion, that she was not at the masquerade last night." He then related to the doctor the discovery of the plot; and the good man was greatly pleased with the success of the stratagem, and that Booth took it in such good part.

"But, sir," says Booth, "I had a letter given me by a noble colonel there, which is written in a hand so very like yours, that I could almost swear to it. Nor is the stile, as far as I can guess, unlike your own. Here it is, sir. Do you own the letter, doctor, or do you not?"

The doctor took the letter, and, having looked at it a moment, said, "And did the colonel himself give you this letter?"

"The colonel himself," answered Booth.

"Why then," cries the doctor, "he is surely the most impudent fellow that the world ever produced. What! did he deliver it with an air of triumph?"

"He delivered it me with air enough," cries Booth, "after his own manner, and bid me read it for my edification. To say the truth, I am a little surprized that he should single me out of all mankind to deliver the letter to; I do not think I deserve the

Digitized by Google

character of such a husband. It is well I am not so very forward to take an affront as some folks."

"I am glad to see you are not," said the doctor; "and your behaviour in this affair becomes both the man of sense and the Christian; for it would be surely the greatest folly, as well as the most daring impiety, to risque your own life for the impertinence of a fool. As long as you are assured of the virtue of your own wife, it is wisdom in you to despise the efforts of such a wretch. Not, indeed, that your wife accuses him of any downright attack, though she hath observed enough in his behaviour to give offence to her delicacy."

"You astonish me, doctor," said Booth. "What can you mean? my wife dislike his behaviour! hath the colonel ever offended her?"

"I do not say he hath ever offended her by any open declarations; nor hath he done anything which, according to the most romantic notion of honour, you can or ought to resent; but there is something extremely nice in the chastity of a truly virtuous woman."

"And hath my wife really complained of anything of that kind in the colonel?"

"Look ye, young gentleman," cries the doctor; "I will have no quarrelling or challenging; I find I have made some mistake, and therefore I insist upon it by all the rights of friendship, that you give me your word of honour you will not quarrel with the colonel on this account."

"I do, with all my heart," said Booth; "for, if I did not know your character, I should absolutely think you was jesting with me. I do not think you

Digitized by Google

have mistaken my wife, but I am sure she hath mistaken the colonel, and hath misconstrued some overstrained point of gallantry, something of the Quixote kind, into a design against her chastity; but I have that opinion of the colonel, that I hope you will not be offended when I declare I know not which of you two I should be the sooner jealous of."

"I would by no means have you jealous of any one," cries the doctor; "for I think my child's virtue may be firmly relied on; but I am convinced she would not have said what she did to me without a cause; nor should I, without such a conviction, have written that letter to the colonel, as I own to you I did. However, nothing I say hath yet past which, even in the opinion of false honour, you are at liberty to resent! but as to declining any great intimacy, if you will take my advice, I think that would be prudent."

"You will pardon me, my dearest friend," said Booth, "but I have really such an opinion of the colonel that I would pawn my life upon his honour; and as for women, I do not believe he ever had an attachment to any."

"Be it so," said the doctor: "I have only two things to insist on. The first is, that, if ever you change your opinion, this letter may not be the subject of any quarrelling or fighting: the other is, that you never mention a word of this to your wife. By the latter I shall see whether you can keep a secret; and, if it is no otherwise material, it will be a wholesome exercise to your mind; for the practice of any virtue is a kind of mental exercise, and serves to maintain the health and vigour of the soul."

Digitized by Google

"I faithfully promise both," cries Booth. And now the breakfast entered the room, as did soon after Amelia and Mrs. Atkinson.

The conversation ran chiefly on the masquerade; and Mrs. Atkinson gave an account of several adventures there; but whether she told the whole truth with regard to herself I will not determine, for, certain it is, she never once mentioned the name of the noble peer. Amongst the rest, she said there was a young fellow that had preached a sermon there upon a stool, in praise of adultery, she believed; for she could not get near enough to hear the particulars.

During that transaction Booth had been engaged with the blue domino in another room, so that he knew nothing of it; so that what Mrs. Atkinson had now said only brought to his mind the doctor's letter to Colonel Bath, for to him he supposed it was written; and the idea of the colonel being a lover to Amelia struck him in so ridiculous a light, that it threw him into a violent fit of laughter.

The doctor, who, from the natural jealousy of an author, imputed the agitation of Booth's muscles to his own sermon or letter on that subject, was a little offended, and said gravely, "I should be glad to know the reason of this immoderate mirth. Is adultery a matter of jest in your opinion?"

"Far otherwise," answered Booth. "But how is it possible to refrain from laughter at the idea of a fellow preaching a sermon in favour of it at such a place?"

"I am very sorry," cries the doctor, "to find the

Digitized by Google

age is grown to so scandalous a degree of licentiousness, that we have thrown off not only virtue, but decency. How abandoned must be the manners of any nation where such insults upon religion and morality can be committed with impunity! No man is fonder of true wit and humour than myself; but to profane sacred things with jest and scoffing is a sure sign of a weak and a wicked mind. It is the very vice which Homer attacks in the odious character of Thersites. The ladies must excuse my repeating the passage to you, as I know you have Greek enough to understand it: —

Ὅς ῥ' ἔπεα φρεσὶν ἦσιν ἄκοσμά τε, πολλά τε ἤδη.
Μὰψ, ἀτὰρ οὐ κατὰ κόσμον ἐριζέμεναι βασιλεῦσιν,
Ἀλλ' ὅ, τι οἱ εἴσαιτο γελοιῖον Ἀργείοισιν
Ἔμμεναι.[1]

And immediately adds,

—— αἴσχιστος δὲ ἀνὴρ ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθε.[2]

"Horace, again, describes such a rascal:

—— Solutos
Qui captat risus hominum famamque dicacis,[3]

and says of him,

Hic niger est, hunc tu, Romane, caveto."[4]

---

[1] Thus paraphrased by Mr. Pope:
"Awed by no shame, by no respect controll'd,
In scandal busy, in reproaches bold,
With witty malice, studious to defame,
Scorn all his joy, and laughter all his aim."

[2] "He was the greatest scoundrel in the whole army."

[3] "Who trivial bursts of laughter strives to raise,
And courts of prating petulance the praise." — Francis.

[4] "This man is black; do thou, O Roman! shun this man."

Digitized by Google

"O charming Homer!" said Mrs. Atkinson, "how much above all other writers!"

"I ask your pardon, madam," said the doctor; "I forgot you was a scholar; but, indeed, I did not know you understood Greek as well as Latin."

"I do not pretend," said she, "to be a critic in the Greek; but I think I am able to read a little of Homer, at least with the help of looking now and then into the Latin."

"Pray, madam," said the doctor, "how do you like this passage in the speech of Hector to Andromache:

——Εἰς οἶκον ἰοῦσα τὰ σαυτῆς ἔργα κόμιζε,
Ἱστόν τε ἠλακάτην τε, καὶ ἀμφιπόλοισι κέλευε
Ἔργον ἐποίχεσθαι?[1]

"Or how do you like the character of Hippodamia, who, by being the prettiest girl and best workwoman of her age, got one of the best husbands in all Troy?—I think, indeed, Homer enumerates her discretion with her other qualifications; but I do not remember he gives us one character of a woman of learning.—Don't you conceive this to be a great omission in that charming poet? However, Juvenal makes you amends, for he talks very abundantly of the learning of the Roman ladies in his time."

"You are a provoking man, doctor," said Mrs. Atkinson; "where is the harm in a woman's having learning as well as a man?"

[1] "Go home and mind your own business. Follow your spinning, and keep your maids to their work."

Digitized by Google

"Let me ask you another question," said the doctor. "Where is the harm in a man's being a fine performer with a needle as well as a woman? And yet, answer me honestly; would you greatly chuse to marry a man with a thimble upon his finger? Would you in earnest think a needle became the hand of your husband as well as a halberd?"

"As to war, I am with you," said she. "Homer himself, I well remember, makes Hector tell his wife that warlike works — what is the Greek word — Pollemy — something — belonged to men only; and I readily agree to it. I hate a masculine woman, an Amazon, as much as you can do; but what is there masculine in learning?"

"Nothing so masculine, take my word for it. As for your Pollemy, I look upon it to be the true characteristic of a devil. So Homer everywhere characterizes Mars."

"Indeed, my dear," cries the serjeant, "you had better not dispute with the doctor; for, upon my word, he will be too hard for you."

"Nay, I beg *you* will not interfere," cries Mrs. Atkinson; "I am sure *you* can be no judge in these matters."

At which the doctor and Booth burst into a loud laugh; and Amelia, though fearful of giving her friend offence, could not forbear a gentle smile.

"You may laugh, gentlemen, if you please," said Mrs. Atkinson; "but I thank Heaven I have married a man who is not jealous of my understanding. I should have been the most miserable woman upon earth with a starched pedant who was possessed of

Digitized by Google

that nonsensical opinion that the difference of sexes causes any difference in the mind. Why don't you honestly avow the Turkish notion that women have no souls? for you say the same thing in effect."

"Indeed, my dear," cries the serjeant, greatly concerned to see his wife so angry, "you have mistaken the doctor."

"I beg, my dear," cried she, "*you* will say nothing upon these subjects — I hope *you* at least do not despise my understanding."

"I assure you, I do not," said the serjeant; "and I hope you will never despise mine; for a man may have some understanding, I hope, without learning."

Mrs. Atkinson reddened extremely at these words; and the doctor, fearing he had gone too far, began to soften matters, in which Amelia assisted him. By these means, the storm rising in Mrs. Atkinson before was in some measure laid, at least suspended from bursting at present; but it fell afterwards upon the poor serjeant's head in a torrent, who had learned perhaps one maxim from his trade, that a cannon-ball always doth mischief in proportion to the resistance it meets with, and that nothing so effectually deadens its force as a woolpack. The serjeant therefore bore all with patience: and the idea of a woolpack, perhaps, bringing that of a feather-bed into his head, he at last not only quieted his wife, but she cried out with great sincerity, "Well, my dear, I will say one thing for you, that I believe from my soul, though you have no learning, you have the best understanding of any man upon earth;

Digitized by Google

and I must own I think the latter far the more profitable of the two."

Far different was the idea she entertained of the doctor, whom, from this day, she considered as a conceited pedant; nor could all Amelia's endeavours ever alter her sentiments.

The doctor now took his leave of Booth and his wife for a week, he intending to set out within an hour or two with his old friend, with whom our readers were a little acquainted at the latter end of the ninth book, and of whom, perhaps, they did not then conceive the most favourable opinion.

Nay, I am aware that the esteem which some readers before had for the doctor may be here lessened; since he may appear to have been too easy a dupe to the gross flattery of the old gentleman. If there be any such critics, we are heartily sorry, as well for them as for the doctor; but it is our business to discharge the part of a faithful historian, and to describe human nature as it is, not as we would wish it to be.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FIVE

IN WHICH COLONEL BATH APPEARS IN GREAT GLORY.

THAT afternoon, as Booth was walking in the Park, he met with Colonel Bath, who presently asked him for the letter which he had given him the night before; upon which Booth immediately returned it.

"Don't you think," cries Bath, "it is writ with great dignity of expression and emphasis of — of — of judgment?"

"I am surprized, though," cries Booth, "that any one should write such a letter to you, colonel."

"To me!" said Bath. "What do you mean, sir? I hope you don't imagine any man durst write such a letter to me? d—n me, if I knew a man who thought me capable of debauching my friend's wife, I would — d—n me."

"I believe, indeed, sir," cries Booth, "that no man living dares put his name to such a letter; but you see it is anonymous."

"I don't know what you mean by ominous," cries the colonel; "but, blast my reputation, if I had received such a letter, if I would not have searched the world to have found the writer. D—n me, I would have gone to the East Indies to have pulled off his nose."

Digitized by Google

"He would, indeed, have deserved it," cries Booth. "But pray, sir, how came you by it?"

"I took it," said the colonel, "from a sett of idle young rascals, one of whom was reading it out aloud upon a stool, while the rest were attempting to make a jest, not only of the letter, but of all decency, virtue, and religion. A sett of fellows that you must have seen or heard of about the town, that are, d—n me, a disgrace to the dignity of manhood; puppies that mistake noise and impudence, rudeness and profaneness, for wit. If the drummers of my company had not more understanding than twenty such fellows, I 'd have them both whipt out of the regiment."

"So, then, you do not know the person to whom it was writ?" said Booth.

"Lieutenant," cries the colonel, "your question deserves no answer. I ought to take time to consider whether I ought not to resent the supposition. Do you think, sir, I am acquainted with a rascal?"

"I do not suppose, colonel," cries Booth, "that you would willingly cultivate an intimacy with such a person; but a man must have good luck who hath any acquaintance if there are not some rascals among them."

"I am not offended with you, child," says the colonel. "I know you did not intend to offend me."

"No man, I believe, dares intend it," said Booth.

"I believe so too," said the colonel; "d—n me, I know it. But you know, child, how tender I am on this subject. If I had been ever married myself, I

Digitized by Google

should have cleft the man's skull who had dared look wantonly at my wife."

"It is certainly the most cruel of all injuries," said Booth. "How finely doth Shakespeare express it in his Othello!

'But there, where I had treasured up my soul.'"

"That Shakespeare," cries the colonel, "was a fine fellow. He was a very pretty poet indeed. Was it not Shakespeare that wrote the play about Hotspur? You must remember these lines. I got them almost by heart at the playhouse; for I never missed that play whenever it was acted, if I was in town: —

By Heav'n it was an easy leap,
To pluck bright honour into the full moon,
Or drive into the bottomless deep.

And — and — faith, I have almost forgot them; but I know it is something about saving your honour from drowning — O! it is very fine! I say, d—n me, the man that writ those lines was the greatest poet the world ever produced. There is dignity of expression and emphasis of thinking, d—n me."

Booth assented to the colonel's criticism, and then cried, "I wish, colonel, you would be so kind to give me that letter." The colonel answered, if he had any particular use for it he would give it him with all his heart, and presently delivered it; and soon afterwards they parted.

Several passages now struck all at once upon Booth's mind, which gave him great uneasiness. He became confident now that he had mistaken one

Digitized by Google

colonel for another: and, though he could not account for the letter's getting into those hands from whom Bath had taken it (indeed James had dropt it out of his pocket), yet a thousand circumstances left him no room to doubt the identity of the person, who was a man much more liable to raise the suspicion of a husband than honest Bath, who would at any time have rather fought with a man than lain with a woman.

The whole behaviour of Amelia now rushed upon his memory. Her resolution not to take up her residence at the colonel's house, her backwardness even to dine there, her unwillingness to go to the masquerade, many of her unguarded expressions, and some where she had been more guarded, all joined together to raise such an idea in Mr. Booth, that he had almost taken a resolution to go and cut the colonel to pieces in his own house. Cooler thoughts, however, suggested themselves to him in time. He recollected the promise he had so solemnly made to the doctor. He considered, moreover, that he was yet in the dark as to the extent of the colonel's guilt. Having nothing, therefore, to fear from it, he contented himself to postpone a resentment which he nevertheless resolved to take of the colonel hereafter, if he found he was in any degree a delinquent.

The first step he determined to take was, on the first opportunity, to relate to Colonel James the means by which he became possessed of the letter, and to read it to him; on which occasion, he thought he should easily discern by the behaviour of the colonel whether he had been suspected either by Amelia or

Digitized by Google

the doctor without a cause; but as for his wife, he fully resolved not to reveal the secret to her till the doctor's return.

While Booth was deeply engaged by himself in these meditations, Captain Trent came up to him, and familiarly slapped him on the shoulder.

They were soon joined by a third gentleman, and presently afterwards by a fourth, both acquaintances of Mr. Trent; and all having walked twice the length of the Mall together, it being now past nine in the evening, Trent proposed going to the tavern, to which the strangers immediately consented; and Booth himself, after some resistance, was at length persuaded to comply.

To the King's Arms then they went, where the bottle went very briskly round till after eleven; at which time Trent proposed a game at cards, to which proposal likewise Booth's consent was obtained, though not without much difficulty; for, though he had naturally some inclination to gaming, and had formerly a little indulged it, yet he had entirely left it off for many years.

Booth and his friend were partners, and had at first some success; but Fortune, according to her usual conduct, soon shifted about, and persecuted Booth with such malice, that in about two hours he was stripped of all the gold in his pocket, which amounted to twelve guineas, being more than half the cash which he was at that time worth.

How easy it is for a man who is at all tainted with the itch of gaming to leave off play in such a situation, especially when he is likewise heated with

Digitized by Google

liquor, I leave to the gamester to determine. Certain it is that Booth had no inclination to desist; but, on the contrary, was so eagerly bent on playing on, that he called his friend out of the room, and asked him for ten pieces, which he promised punctually to pay the next morning.

Trent chid him for using so much formality on the occasion. "You know," said he, "dear Booth, you may have what money you please of me. Here is a twenty-pound note at your service; and, if you want five times the sum, it is at your service. We will never let these fellows go away with our money in this manner; for we have so much the advantage, that if the knowing ones were here they would lay odds of our side."

But if this was really Mr. Trent's opinion, he was very much mistaken; for the other two honourable gentlemen were not only greater masters of the game, and somewhat soberer than poor Booth, having, with all the art in their power, evaded the bottle, but they had, moreover, another small advantage over their adversaries, both of them, by means of some certain private signs, previously agreed upon between them, being always acquainted with the principal cards in each other's hands. It cannot be wondered, therefore, that Fortune was on their side; for, however she may be reported to favour fools, she never, I believe, shews them any countenance when they engage in play with knaves.

The more Booth lost, the deeper he made his bets; the consequence of which was, that about two in the morning, besides the loss of his own money,

Digitized by Google

he was fifty pounds indebted to Trent: a sum, indeed, which he would not have borrowed, had not the other, like a very generous friend, pushed it upon him.

Trent's pockets became at last dry by means of these loans. His own loss, indeed, was trifling; for the stakes of the games were no higher than crowns, and betting (as it is called) was that to which Booth owed his ruin. The gentlemen, therefore, pretty well knowing Booth's circumstances, and being kindly unwilling to win more of a man than he was worth, declined playing any longer, nor did Booth once ask them to persist, for he was ashamed of the debt which he had already contracted to Trent, and very far from desiring to encrease it.

The company then separated. The two victors and Trent went off in their chairs to their several houses near Grosvenor-square, and poor Booth, in a melancholy mood, walked home to his lodgings. He was, indeed, in such a fit of despair, that it more than once came into his head to put an end to his miserable being.

But before we introduce him to Amelia we must do her the justice to relate the manner in which she spent this unhappy evening. It was about seven when Booth left her to walk in the park; from this time till past eight she was employed with her children, in playing with them, in giving them their supper, and in putting them to bed.

When these offices were performed she employed herself another hour in cooking up a little supper for her husband, this being, as we have already observed,

Digitized by Google

his favourite meal, as indeed it was her's; and, in a most pleasant and delightful manner, they generally passed their time at this season, though their fare was very seldom of the sumptuous kind.

It now grew dark, and her hashed mutton was ready for the table, but no Booth appeared. Having waited therefore for him a full hour, she gave him over for that evening; nor was she much alarmed at his absence, as she knew he was in a night or two to be at the tavern with some brother-officers; she concluded therefore that they had met in the park, and had agreed to spend this evening together.

At ten then she sat down to supper by herself, for Mrs. Atkinson was then abroad. And here we cannot help relating a little incident, however trivial it may appear to some. Having sat some time alone, reflecting on their distressed situation, her spirits grew very low; and she was once or twice going to ring the bell to send her maid for half-a-pint of white wine, but checked her inclination in order to save the little sum of sixpence, which she did the more resolutely as she had before refused to gratify her children with tarts for their supper from the same motive. And this self-denial she was very very probably practising to save sixpence, while her husband was paying a debt of several guineas incurred by the ace of trumps being in the hands of his adversary.

Instead therefore of this cordial she took up one of the excellent Farquhar's comedies, and read it half through; when, the clock striking twelve, she

Digitized by Google

retired to bed, leaving the maid to sit up for her master. She would, indeed, have much more willingly sat up herself, but the delicacy of her own mind assured her that Booth would not thank her for the compliment. This is, indeed, a method which some wives take of upbraiding their husbands for staying abroad till too late an hour, and of engaging them, through tenderness and good nature, never to enjoy the company of their friends too long when they must do this at the expence of their wives' rest.

To bed then she went, but not to sleep. Thrice indeed she told the dismal clock, and as often heard the more dismal watchman, till her miserable husband found his way home, and stole silently like a thief to bed to her; at which time, pretending then first to awake, she threw her snowy arms around him; though, perhaps, the more witty property of snow, according to Addison, that is to say its coldness, rather belonged to the poor captain.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SIX

READ, GAMESTER, AND OBSERVE.

BOOTH could not so well disguise the agitations of his mind from Amelia, but that she perceived sufficient symptoms to assure her that some misfortune had befallen him. This made her in her turn so uneasy that Booth took notice of it, and after breakfast said, "Sure, my dear Emily, something hath fallen out to vex you."

Amelia, looking tenderly at him, answered, "Indeed, my dear, you are in the right; I am indeed extremely vexed." "For Heaven's sake," said he, "what is it?" "Nay, my love," cried she, "that you must answer yourself. Whatever it is which hath given you all that disturbance that you in vain endeavour to conceal from me, this it is which causes all my affliction."

"You guess truly, my sweet," replied Booth; "I am indeed afflicted, and I will not, nay I cannot, conceal the truth from you. I have undone myself, Amelia."

"What have you done, child?" said she, in some consternation; "pray, tell me."

"I have lost my money at play," answered he.

"Pugh!" said she, recovering herself — "what signifies the trifle you had in your pocket? Resolve

Digitized by Google

never to play again, and let it give you no further vexation; I warrant you, we will contrive some method to repair such a loss."

"Thou heavenly angel! thou comfort of my soul!" cried Booth, tenderly embracing her; then starting a little from her arms, and looking with eager fondness in her eyes, he said, "Let me survey thee; art thou really human, or art thou not rather an angel in a human form? O, no," cried he, flying again into her arms, "thou art my dearest woman, my best, my beloved wife!"

Amelia, having returned all his caresses with equal kindness, told him she had near eleven guineas in her purse, and asked how much she should fetch him. "I would not advise you, Billy, to carry too much in your pocket, for fear it should be a temptation to you to return to gaming, in order to retrieve your past losses. Let me beg you, on all accounts, never to think more, if possible, on the trifle you have lost, any more than if you had never possessed it."

Booth promised her faithfully he never would, and refused to take any of the money. He then hesitated a moment, and cried — "You say, my dear, you have eleven guineas; you have a diamond ring, likewise, which was your grandmother's — I believe that is worth twenty pounds; and your own and the child's watch are worth as much more."

"I believe they would sell for as much," cries Amelia; "for a pawnbroker of Mrs. Atkinson's acquaintance offered to lend me thirty-five pounds upon them when you was in your last distress. But why are you computing their value now?"

Digitized by Google

"I was only considering," answered he, "how much we could raise in any case of exigency."

"I have computed it myself," said she; "and I believe all we have in the world, besides our bare necessary apparel, would produce about sixty pounds: and suppose, my dear," said she, "while we have that little sum, we should think of employing it some way or other, to procure some small subsistence for ourselves and our family. As for your dependence on the colonel's friendship, it is all vain, I am afraid, and fallacious. Nor do I see any hopes you have from any other quarter, of providing for yourself again in the army. And though the sum which is now in our power is very small, yet we may possibly contrive with it to put ourselves into some mean way of livelihood. I have a heart, my Billy, which is capable of undergoing anything for your sake; and I hope my hands are as able to work as those which have been more inured to it. But think, my dear, think what must be our wretched condition, when the very little we now have is all mouldered away, as it will soon be in this town."

When poor Booth heard this, and reflected that the time which Amelia foresaw was already arrived (for that he had already lost every farthing they were worth), it touched him to the quick; he turned pale, gnashed his teeth, and cried out, "Damnation! this is too much to bear."

Amelia was thrown into the utmost consternation by this behaviour; and, with great terror in her countenance, cried out, "Good Heavens! my dear love, what is the reason of this agony?"

Digitized by Google

"Ask me no questions," cried he, "unless you would drive me to madness."

"My Billy! my love!" said she, "what can be the meaning of this?—I beg you will deal openly with me, and tell me all your griefs."

"Have you dealt fairly with me, Amelia?" said he.

"Yes, surely," said she; "Heaven is my witness how fairly."

"Nay, do not call Heaven," cried he, "to witness a falsehood. You have not dealt openly with me, Amelia. You have concealed secrets from me; secrets which I ought to have known, and which, if I had known, it had been better for us both."

"You astonish me as much as you shock me," cried she. "What falsehood, what treachery have I been guilty of?"

"You tell me," said he, "that I can have no reliance on James; why did not you tell me so before?"

"I call Heaven again," said she, "to witness; nay, I appeal to yourself for the truth of it; I have often told you so. I have told you I disliked the man, notwithstanding the many favours he had done you. I desired you not to have too absolute a reliance upon him. I own I had once an extreme good opinion of him, but I changed it, and I acquainted you that I had so—"

"But not," cries he, "with the reasons why you had changed it."

"I was really afraid, my dear," said she, "of going too far. I knew the obligations you had to him; and if I suspected that he acted rather from vanity than true friendship—"

Digitized by Google

"Vanity!" cries he; "take care, Amelia: you know his motive to be much worse than vanity — a motive which, if he had piled obligations on me till they had reached the skies, would tumble all down to hell. It is vain to conceal it longer — I know all — your confidant hath told me all."

"Nay, then," cries she, "on my knees I entreat you to be pacified, and hear me out. It was, my dear, for you, my dread of your jealous honour, and the fatal consequences."

"Is not Amelia, then," cried he, "equally jealous of my honour? Would she, from a weak tenderness for my person, go privately about to betray, to undermine the most invaluable treasure of my soul? Would she have me pointed at as the credulous dupe, the easy fool, the tame, the kind cuckold, of a rascal with whom I conversed as a friend?"

"Indeed you injure me," said Amelia. "Heaven forbid I should have the trial! but I think I could sacrifice all I hold most dear to preserve your honour. I think I have shewn I can. But I will — when you are cool, I will — satisfy you I have done nothing you ought to blame."

"I am cool then," cries he; "I will with the greatest coolness hear you. — But do not think, Amelia, I have the least jealousy, the least suspicion, the least doubt of your honour. It is your want of confidence in me alone which I blame."

"When you are calm," cried she, "I will speak, and not before."

He assured her he was calm; and then she said, "You have justified my conduct by your present

Digitized by Google

passion, in concealing from you my suspicions; for they were no more, nay, it is possible they were unjust; for since the doctor, in betraying the secret to you, hath so far falsified my opinion of him, why may I not be as well deceived in my opinion of the colonel, since it was only formed on some particulars in his behaviour which I disliked? for, upon my honour, he never spoke a word to me, nor hath been ever guilty of any direct action, which I could blame." She then went on, and related most of the circumstances which she had mentioned to the doctor, omitting one or two of the strongest, and giving such a turn to the rest, that, if Booth had not had some of Othello's blood in him, his wife would have almost appeared a prude in his eyes. Even he, however, was pretty well pacified by this narrative, and said he was glad to find a possibility of the colonel's innocence; but that he greatly commended the prudence of his wife, and only wished she would for the future make him her only confidant.

Amelia, upon that, expressed some bitterness against the doctor for breaking his trust; when Booth, in his excuse, related all the circumstances of the letter, and plainly convinced her that the secret had dropt by mere accident from the mouth of the doctor.

Thus the husband and wife became again reconciled, and poor Amelia generously forgave a passion of which the sagacious reader is better acquainted with the real cause than was that unhappy lady.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SEVEN

IN WHICH BOOTH RECEIVES A VISIT FROM CAPTAIN TRENT.

WHEN Booth grew perfectly cool, and began to reflect that he had broken his word to the doctor, in having made the discovery to his wife which we have seen in the last chapter, that thought gave him great uneasiness; and now, to comfort him, Captain Trent came to make him a visit.

This was, indeed, almost the last man in the world whose company he wished for; for he was the only man he was ashamed to see, for a reason well known to gamesters; among whom, the most dishonourable of all things is not to pay a debt, contracted at the gaming-table, the next day, or the next time at least that you see the party.

Booth made no doubt but that Trent was come on purpose to receive this debt; the latter had been therefore scarce a minute in the room before Booth began, in an aukward manner, to apologise; but Trent immediately stopt his mouth, and said, "I do not want the money, Mr. Booth, and you may pay it me whenever you are able; and, if you are never able, I assure you I will never ask you for it."

This generosity raised such a tempest of gratitude in Booth (if I may be allowed the expression), that

Digitized by Google

the tears burst from his eyes, and it was some time before he could find any utterance for those sentiments with which his mind overflowed; but, when he began to express his thankfulness, Trent immediately stopt him, and gave a sudden turn to their discourse.

Mrs. Trent had been to visit Mrs. Booth on the masquerade evening, which visit Mrs. Booth had not yet returned. Indeed, this was only the second day since she had received it. Trent therefore now told his friend that he should take it extremely kind if he and his lady would waive all ceremony, and sup at their house the next evening. Booth hesitated a moment, but presently said, "I am pretty certain my wife is not engaged, and I will undertake for her. I am sure she will not refuse anything Mr. Trent can ask." And soon after Trent took Booth with him to walk in the Park.

There were few greater lovers of a bottle than Trent; he soon proposed therefore to adjourn to the King's Arms tavern, where Booth, though much against his inclination, accompanied him. But Trent was very importunate, and Booth did not think himself at liberty to refuse such a request to a man from whom he had so lately received such obligations.

When they came to the tavern, however, Booth recollected the omission he had been guilty of the night before. He wrote a short note therefore to his wife, acquainting her that he should not come home to supper; but comforted her with a faithful promise that he would on no account engage himself in gaming.

Digitized by Google

The first bottle passed in ordinary conversation; but, when they had tapped the second, Booth, on some hints which Trent gave him, very fairly laid open to him his whole circumstances, and declared he almost despaired of mending them. "My chief relief," said he, "was in the interest of Colonel James; but I have given up those hopes."

"And very wisely too," said Trent. "I say nothing of the colonel's good will. Very likely he may be your sincere friend; but I do not believe he hath the interest he pretends to. He hath had too many favours in his own family to ask any more yet a while. But I am mistaken if you have not a much more powerful friend than the colonel; one who is both able and willing to serve you. I dined at his table within these two days, and I never heard kinder nor warmer expressions from the mouth of man than he made use of towards you. I make no doubt you know whom I mean."

"Upon my honour I do not," answered Booth; "nor did I guess that I had such a friend in the world as you mention."

"I am glad then," cries Trent, "that I have the pleasure of informing you of it." He then named the noble peer who hath been already so often mentioned in this history.

Booth turned pale and started at his name. "I forgive you, my dear Trent," cries Booth, "for mentioning his name to me, as you are a stranger to what hath passed between us."

"Nay, I know nothing that hath passed between you," answered Trent. "I am sure, if there is any

Digitized by Google

quarrel between you of two days' standing, all is forgiven on his part."

"D—n his forgiveness!" said Booth. "Perhaps I ought to blush at what I have forgiven."

"You surprize me!" cries Trent. "Pray what can be the matter?"

"Indeed, my dear Trent," cries Booth, very gravely, "he would have injured me in the tenderest part. I know not how to tell it you; but he would have dishonoured me with my wife."

"Sure, you are not in earnest!" answered Trent; "but, if you are, you will pardon me for thinking that impossible."

"Indeed," cries Booth, "I have so good an opinion of my wife as to believe it impossible for him to succeed; but that he should intend me the favour you will not, I believe, think an impossibility."

"Faith! not in the least," said Trent. "Mrs. Booth is a very fine woman; and, if I had the honour to be her husband, I should not be angry with any man for liking her."

"But you would be angry," said Booth, "with a man, who should make use of stratagems and contrivances to seduce her virtue; especially if he did this under the colour of entertaining the highest friendship for yourself."

"Not at all," cries Trent. "It is human nature."

"Perhaps it is," cries Booth; "but it is human nature depraved, stript of all its worth, and loveliness, and dignity, and degraded down to a level with the vilest brutes."

Digitized by Google

"Look ye, Booth," cries Trent, "I would not be misunderstood. I think, when I am talking to you, I talk to a man of sense and to an inhabitant of this country, not to one who dwells in a land of saints. If you have really such an opinion as you express of this noble lord, you have the finest opportunity of making a complete fool and bubble of him that any man can desire, and of making your own fortune at the same time. I do not say that your suspicions are groundless; for, of all men upon earth I know, my lord is the greatest bubble to women, though I believe he hath had very few. And this I am confident of, that he hath not the least jealousy of these suspicions. Now, therefore, if you will act the part of a wise man, I will undertake that you shall make your fortune without the least injury to the chastity of Mrs. Booth."

"I do not understand you, sir," said Booth.

"Nay," cries Trent, "if you will not understand me, I have done. I meant only your service; and I thought I had known you better."

Booth begged him to explain himself. "If you can," said he, "shew me any way to improve such circumstances as I have opened to you, you may depend on it I shall readily embrace it, and own my obligations to you."

"That is spoken like a man," cries Trent. "Why, what is it more than this? Carry your suspicions in your own bosom. Let Mrs. Booth, in whose virtue I am sure you may be justly confident, go to the public places; there let her treat my lord with common civility only; I am sure he will bite. And thus,

Digitized by Google

without suffering him to gain his purpose, you will gain yours. I know several who have succeeded with him in this manner."

"I am very sorry, sir," cries Booth, "that you are acquainted with any such rascals. I do assure you, rather than I would act such a part, I would submit to the hardest sentence that fortune could pronounce against me."

"Do as you please, sir," said Trent; "I have only ventured to advise you as a friend. But do you not think your nicety is a little over-scrupulous?"

"You will excuse me, sir," said Booth; "but I think no man can be too scrupulous in points which concern his honour."

"I know many men of very nice honour," answered Trent, "who have gone much farther; and no man, I am sure, had ever a better excuse for it than yourself. You will forgive me, Booth, since what I speak proceeds from my love to you; nay, indeed, by mentioning your affairs to me, which I am heartily sorry for, you have given me a right to speak. You know best what friends you have to depend upon; but, if you have no other pretensions than your merit, I can assure you you would fail, if it was possible you could have ten times more merit than you have. And, if you love your wife, as I am convinced you do, what must be your condition in seeing her want the necessaries of life?"

"I know my condition is very hard," cries Booth; "but I have one comfort in it, which I will never part with, and that is innocence. As to the mere necessaries of life, however, it is pretty difficult to

Digitized by Google

deprive us of them; this I am sure of, no one can want them long."

"Upon my word, sir," cries Trent, "I did not know you had been so great a philosopher. But, believe me, these matters look much less terrible at a distance than when they are actually present. You will then find, I am afraid, that honour hath no more skill in cookery than Shakspere tells us it hath in surgery. D—n me if I don't wish his lordship loved my wife as well as he doth yours, I promise you I would trust her virtue; and, if he should get the better of it, I should have people of fashion enough to keep me in countenance."

Their second bottle being now almost out, Booth, without making any answer, called for a bill. Trent pressed very much the drinking another bottle, but. Booth absolutely refused, and presently afterwards they parted, not extremely well satisfied with each other. They appeared, indeed, one to the other, in disadvantageous lights of a very different kind. Trent concluded Booth to be a very silly fellow, and Booth began to suspect that Trent was very little better than a scoundrel.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONTAINS A LETTER AND OTHER MATTERS.

WE will now return to Amelia; to whom, immediately upon her husband's departure to walk with Mr. Trent, a porter brought the following letter, which she immediately opened and read:

"MADAM,—The quick despatch which I have given to your first commands will I hope assure you of the diligence with which I shall always obey every command that you are pleased to honour me with. I have, indeed, in this trifling affair, acted as if my life itself had been at stake; nay, I know not but it may be so; for this insignificant matter, you was pleased to tell me, would oblige the charming person in whose power is not only my happiness, but, as I am well persuaded, my life too. Let me reap therefore some little advantage in your eyes, as you have in mine, from this trifling occasion, for, if anything could add to the charms of which you are mistress, it would be perhaps that amiable zeal with which you maintain the cause of your friend. I hope, indeed, she will be my friend and advocate with the most lovely of her sex, as I think she hath reason, and as you was pleased to insinuate she had been. Let me beseech you, madam, let not that dear heart, whose tenderness is so inclined to compassionate the miseries of others, be hardened only

Digitized by Google

against the sufferings which itself occasions. Let not that man alone have reason to think you cruel, who, of all others, would do the most to procure your kindness. How often have I lived over in my reflections, in my dreams, those two short minutes we were together! But, alas! how faint are these mimicries of the imagination! What would I not give to purchase the reality of such another blessing! This, madam, is in your power to bestow on the man who hath no wish, no will, no fortune, no heart, no life, but what are at your disposal. Grant me only the favour to be at Lady ——'s assembly. You can have nothing to fear from indulging me with a moment's sight, a moment's conversation; I will ask no more. I know your delicacy, and had rather die than offend it. Could I have seen you sometimes, I believe the fear of offending you would have kept my love for ever buried in my own bosom; but, to be totally excluded even from the sight of what my soul doats on is what I cannot bear. It is that alone which hath extorted the fatal secret from me. Let that obtain your forgiveness for me. I need not sign this letter otherwise than with that impression of my heart which I hope it bears; and, to conclude it in any form, no language hath words of devotion strong enough to tell you with what truth, what anguish, what zeal, what adoration I love you."

Amelia had just strength to hold out to the end, when her trembling grew so violent that she dropt the letter, and had probably dropt herself, had not Mrs. Atkinson come timely in to support her.

"Good Heavens!" cries Mrs. Atkinson, "what is the matter with you, madam?"

"I know not what is the matter," cries Amelia;

Digitized by Google

"but I have received a letter at last from that infamous colonel."

"You will take my opinion again then, I hope, madam," cries Mrs. Atkinson. "But don't be so affected; the letter cannot eat you or run away with you. Here it lies, I see; will you give me leave to read it?"

"Read it with all my heart," cries Amelia; "and give me your advice how to act, for I am almost distracted."

"Heydey!" says Mrs. Atkinson, "here is a piece of parchment too — what is that?" In truth, this parchment had dropt from the letter when Amelia first opened it; but her attention was so fixed by the contents of the letter itself that she had never read the other. Mrs. Atkinson had now opened the parchment first; and, after a moment's perusal, the fire flashed from her eyes, and the blood flushed into her cheeks, and she cried out, in a rapture, "It is a commission for my husband! upon my soul, it is a commission for my husband:" and, at the same time, began to jump about the room in a kind of frantic fit of joy.

"What can be the meaning of all this?" cries Amelia, under the highest degree of astonishment.

"Do not I tell you, my dear madam," cries she, "that it is a commission for my husband? and can you wonder at my being overjoyed at what I know will make him so happy? And now it is all out. The letter is not from the colonel, but from that noble lord of whom I have told you so much. But, indeed, madam, I have some pardons to ask of you.

Digitized by Google

However, I know your goodness, and I will tell you all.

"You are to know then, madam, that I had not been in the Opera-house six minutes before a masque came up, and, taking me by the hand, led me aside. I gave the masque my hand; and, seeing a lady at that time lay hold on Captain Booth, I took that opportunity of slipping away from him; for though, by the help of the squeaking voice, and by attempting to mimic yours, I had pretty well disguised my own, I was still afraid, if I had much conversation with your husband, he would discover me. I walked therefore away with this masque to the upper end of the farthest room, where we sat down in a corner together. He presently discovered to me that he took me for you, and I soon after found out who he was; indeed, so far from attempting to disguise himself, he spoke in his own voice and in his own person. He now began to make very violent love to me, but it vas rather in the stile of a great man of the present age than of an Arcadian swain. In short, he laid his whole fortune at my feet, and bade me make whatever terms I pleased, either for myself or for others. By others, I suppose he meant your husband. This, however, put a thought into my head of turning the present occasion to advantage. I told him there were two kinds of persons, the fallaciousness of whose promises had become proverbial in the world. These were lovers, and great men. What reliance, then, could I have on the promise of one who united in himself both those characters? That I had seen a melancholy instance, in a very worthy woman of

Digitized by Google

my acquaintance (meaning myself, madam), of his want of generosity. I said I knew the obligations that he had to this woman, and the injuries he had done her, all which I was convinced she forgave, for that she had said the handsomest things in the world of him to me. He answered that he thought he had not been deficient in generosity to this lady (for I explained to him whom I meant); but that indeed, if she had spoke well of him to me (meaning yourself, madam), he would not fail to reward her for such an obligation. I then told him she had married a very deserving man, who had served long in the army abroad as a private man, and who was a serjeant in the guards; that I knew it was so very easy for him to get him a commission, that I should not think he had any honour or goodness in the world if he neglected it. I declared this step must be a preliminary to any good opinion he must ever hope for of mine. I then professed the greatest friendship to that lady (in which I am convinced you will think me serious), and assured him he would give me one of the highest pleasures in letting me be the instrument of doing her such a service. He promised me in a moment to do what you see, madam, he hath since done. And to you I shall always think myself indebted for it."

"I know not how you are indebted to me," cries Amelia. "Indeed, I am very glad of any good fortune that can attend poor Atkinson, but I wish it had been obtained some other way. Good Heavens! what must be the consequence of this? What must this lord think of me for listening to his mention of

Digitized by Google

love? nay, for making any terms with him? for what must he suppose those terms mean? Indeed, Mrs. Atkinson, you carried it a great deal too far. No wonder he had the assurance to write to me in the manner he hath done. It is too plain what he conceives of me, and who knows what he may say to others? You may have blown up my reputation by your behaviour."

"How is that possible?" answered Mrs. Atkinson. "Is it not in my power to clear up all matters? If you will but give me leave to make an appointment in your name I will meet him myself, and declare the whole secret to him."

"I will consent to no such appointment," cries Amelia. "I am heartily sorry I ever consented to practise any deceit. I plainly see the truth of what Dr. Harrison hath often told me, that, if one steps ever so little out of the ways of virtue and innocence, we know not how we may slide, for all the ways of vice are a slippery descent."

"That sentiment," cries Mrs. Atkinson, "is much older than Dr. Harrison. *Omne vitium in proclivi est.*"

"However new or old it is, I find it is true," cries Amelia — "But, pray, tell me all, though I tremble to hear it."

"Indeed, my dear friend," said Mrs. Atkinson, "you are terrified at nothing — indeed, indeed, you are too great a prude."

"I do not know what you mean by prudery," answered Amelia. "I shall never be ashamed of the strictest regard to decency, to reputation, and

Digitized by Google

to that honour in which the dearest of all human creatures hath his share. But, pray, give me the letter, there is an expression in it which alarmed me when I read it. Pray, what doth he mean by his two short minutes, and by purchasing the reality of such another blessing?"

"Indeed, I know not what he means by two minutes," cries Mrs. Atkinson, "unless he calls two hours so; for we were not together much less. And as for any blessing he had, I am a stranger to it. Sure, I hope you have a better opinion of me than to think I granted him the last favour."

"I don't know what favours you granted him, madam," answered Amelia peevishly, "but I am sorry you granted him any in my name."

"Upon my word," cries Mrs. Atkinson, "you use me unkindly, and it is an usage I did not expect at your hands, nor do I know that I have deserved it. I am sure I went to the masquerade with no other view than to oblige you, nor did I say or do anything there which any woman who is not the most confounded prude upon earth would have started at on a much less occasion than what induced me. Well, I declare upon my soul then, that, if I was a man, rather than be married to a woman who makes such a fuss with her virtue, I would wish my wife was without such a troublesome companion."

"Very possibly, madam, these may be your sentiments," cries Amelia, "and I hope they are the sentiments of your husband."

"I desire, madam," cries Mrs. Atkinson, "you would not reflect on my husband. He is a worthy

Digitized by Google

man and as brave a man as yours; yes, madam, and he is now as much a captain."

She spoke those words with so loud a voice, that Atkinson, who was accidentally going up-stairs, heard them; and, being surprized at the angry tone of his wife's voice, he entered the room, and, with a look of much astonishment, begged to know what was the matter.

"The matter, my dear," cries Mrs. Atkinson, "is that I have got a commission for you, and your good old friend here is angry with me for getting it."

"I have not spirits enow," cries Amelia, "to answer you as you deserve; and, if I had, you are below my anger."

"I do not know, Mrs. Booth," answered the other, "whence this great superiority over me is derived; but, if your virtue gives it you, I would have you to know, madam, that I despise a prude as much as you can do a ——."

"Though you have several times," cries Amelia, "insulted me with that word, I scorn to give you any ill language in return. If you deserve any bad appellation, you know it, without my telling it you."

Poor Atkinson, who was more frightened than he had ever been in his life, did all he could to procure peace. He fell upon his knees to his wife, and begged her to compose herself; for indeed she seemed to be in a most furious rage.

While he was in this posture Booth, who had knocked so gently at the door, for fear of disturbing

Digitized by Google

his wife, that he had not been heard in the tempest, came into the room. The moment Amelia saw him, the tears which had been gathering for some time, burst in a torrent from her eyes, which, however, she endeavoured to conceal with her handkerchief. The entry of Booth turned all in an instant into a silent picture, in which the first figure which struck the eyes of the captain was the serjeant on his knees to his wife.

Booth immediately cried, "What's the meaning of this?" but received no answer. He then cast his eyes towards Amelia, and, plainly discerning her condition, he ran to her, and in a very tender phrase begged to know what was the matter. To which she answered, "Nothing, my dear, nothing of any consequence." He replied that he would know, and then turned to Atkinson, and asked the same question.

Atkinson answered, "Upon my honour, sir, I know nothing of it. Something hath passed between madam and my wife; but what it is I know no more than your honour."

"Your wife," said Mrs. Atkinson, "hath used me cruelly ill, Mr. Booth. If you must be satisfied, that is the whole matter."

Booth rapt out a great oath, and cried, "It is impossible; my wife is not capable of using any one ill."

Amelia then cast herself upon her knees to her husband, and cried, "For Heaven's sake do not throw yourself into a passion — some few words have past — perhaps I may be in the wrong."

Digitized by Google

"Damnation seize me if I think so!" cries Booth. "And I wish whoever hath drawn these tears from your eyes may pay it with as many drops of their heart's blood."

"You see, madam," cries Mrs. Atkinson, "you have your bully to take your part; so I suppose you will use your triumph."

Amelia made no answer, but still kept hold of Booth, who, in a violent rage, cried out, "My Amelia triumph over such a wretch as thee! — What can lead thy insolence to such presumption! Serjeant, I desire you 'll take that monster out of the room, or I cannot answer for myself."

The serjeant was beginning to beg his wife to retire (for he perceived very plainly that she had, as the phrase is, taken a sip too much that evening) when, with a rage little short of madness, she cried out, "And do you tamely see me insulted in such a manner, now that you are a gentleman, and upon a footing with him?"

"It is lucky for us all, perhaps," answered Booth, "that he is not my equal."

"You lie, sirrah," said Mrs. Atkinson; "he is every way your equal; he is as good a gentleman as yourself, and as much an officer. No, I retract what I say; he hath not the spirit of a gentleman, nor of a man neither, or he would not bear to see his wife insulted."

"Let me beg of you, my dear," cries the serjeant, "to go with me and compose yourself."

"Go with thee, thou wretch!" cries she, looking with the utmost disdain upon him; "no, nor ever

Digitized by Google

speak to thee more." At which words she burst out of the room, and the serjeant, without saying a word, followed her.

A very tender and pathetic scene now passed between Booth and his wife, in which, when she was a little composed, she related to him the whole story. For, besides that it was not possible for her otherwise to account for the quarrel which he had seen, Booth was now possessed of the letter that lay on the floor.

Amelia, having emptied her mind to her husband, and obtained his faithful promise that he would not resent the affair to my lord, was pretty well composed, and began to relent a little towards Mrs. Atkinson; but Booth was so highly incensed with her, that he declared he would leave her house the next morning; which they both accordingly did, and immediately accommodated themselves with convenient apartments within a few doors of their friend the doctor.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER NINE

CONTAINING SOME THINGS WORTHY OBSERVATION.

NOTWITHSTANDING the exchange of his lodgings, Booth did not forget to send an excuse to Mr. Trent, of whose conversation he had taken a full surfeit the preceding evening.

That day in his walks Booth met with an old brother-officer, who had served with him at Gibraltar, and was on half-pay as well as himself. He had not, indeed, had the fortune of being broke with his regiment, as was Booth, but had gone out, as they call it, on half-pay as a lieutenant, a rank to which he had risen in five-and-thirty years.

This honest gentleman, after some discourse with Booth, desired him to lend him half-a-crown, which he assured him he would faithfully pay the next day, when he was to receive some money for his sister. The sister was the widow of an officer that had been killed in the sea-service; and she and her brother lived together, on their joint stock, out of which they maintained likewise an old mother and two of the sister's children, the eldest of which was about nine years old. "You must know," said the old lieutenant, "I have been disappointed this morning by an old scoundrel, who wanted fifteen per cent.

Digitized by Google

for advancing my sister's pension; but I have now got an honest fellow who hath promised it me to-morrow at ten per cent."

"And enough too, of all conscience," cries Booth.

"Why, indeed, I think so too," answered the other; "considering it is sure to be paid one time or other. To say the truth, it is a little hard the government doth not pay those pensions better; for my sister's hath been due almost these two years; that is my way of thinking."

Booth answered he was ashamed to refuse him such a sum; but, "Upon my soul," said he, "I have not a single halfpenny in my pocket; for I am in a worse condition, if possible, than yourself; for I have lost all my money, and, what is worse, I owe Mr. Trent, whom you remember at Gibraltar, fifty pounds."

"Remember him! yes, d—n him! I remember him very well," cries the old gentleman, "though he will not remember me. He is grown so great now that he will not speak to his old acquaintance; and yet I should be ashamed of myself to be great in such a manner."

"What manner do you mean?" cries Booth, a little eagerly.

"Why, by pimping," answered the other; "he is pimp in ordinary to my Lord ——, who keeps his family; or how the devil he lives else I don't know, for his place is not worth three hundred pounds a year, and he and his wife spend a thousand at least. But she keeps an assembly, which, I believe, if you was to call a bawdy-house, you would not misname it. But d—n me if I had not rather be an honest man,

Digitized by Google

and walk on foot, with holes in my shoes, as I do now, or go without a dinner, as I and all my family will to-day, than ride in a chariot and feast by such means. I am honest Bob Bound, and always will be; that 's my way of thinking; and there 's no man shall call me otherwise; for if he doth, I will knock him down for a lying rascal; that is my way of thinking."

"And a very good way of thinking too," cries Booth. "However, you shall not want a dinner to-day; for if you will go home with me, I will lend you a crown with all my heart."

"Lookee," said the old man, "if it be anywise inconvenient to you I will not have it; for I will never rob another man of his dinner to eat myself — that is my way of thinking."

"Pooh!" said Booth; "never mention such a trifle twice between you and me. Besides, you say you can pay it me to-morrow; and I promise you that will be the same thing."

They then walked together to Booth's lodgings, where Booth, from Amelia's pocket, gave his friend double the little sum he had asked. Upon which the old gentleman shook him heartily by the hand, and, repeating his intention of paying him the next day, made the best of his way to a butcher's, whence he carried off a leg of mutton to a family that had lately kept Lent without any religious merit.

When he was gone Amelia asked her husband who that old gentleman was? Booth answered he was one of the scandals of his country; that the Duke of Marlborough had about thirty years before made him an ensign from a private man for very particular

Digitized by Google

merit; and that he had not long since gone out of the army with a broken heart, upon having several boys put over his head. He then gave her an account of his family, which he had heard from the old gentleman in their way to his house, and with which we have already in a concise manner acquainted the reader.

"Good Heavens!" cries Amelia; "what are our great men made of? are they in reality a distinct species from the rest of mankind? are they born without hearts?"

"One would, indeed, sometimes," cries Booth, "be inclined to think so. In truth, they have no perfect idea of those common distresses of mankind which are far removed from their own sphere. Compassion, if thoroughly examined, will, I believe, appear to be the fellow-feeling only of men of the same rank and degree of life for one another, on account of the evils to which they themselves are liable. Our sensations are, I am afraid, very cold towards those who are at a great distance from us, and whose calamities can consequently never reach us."

"I remember," cries Amelia, "a sentiment of Dr. Harrison's, which he told me was in some Latin book; *I am a man myself, and my heart is interested in whatever can befal the rest of mankind.* That is the sentiment of a good man, and whoever thinks otherwise is a bad one."

"I have often told you, my dear Emily," cries Booth, "that all men, as well the best as the worst, act alike from the principle of self-love. Where benevolence therefore is the uppermost passion, self-

Digitized by Google

love directs you to gratify it by doing good, and by relieving the distresses of others; for they are then in reality your own. But where ambition, avarice, pride, or any other passion, governs the man and keeps his benevolence down, the miseries of all other men affect him no more than they would a stock or a stone. And thus the man and his statue have often the same degree of feeling or compassion."

"I have often wished, my dear," cries Amelia, "to hear you converse with Dr. Harrison on this subject; for I am sure he would convince you, though I can't, that there are really such things as religion and virtue."

This was not the first hint of this kind which Amelia had given; for she sometimes apprehended from his discourse that he was little better than an atheist: a consideration which did not diminish her affection for him, but gave her great uneasiness. On all such occasions Booth immediately turned the discourse to some other subject; for, though he had in other points a great opinion of his wife's capacity, yet as a divine or a philosopher he did not hold her in a very respectable light, nor did he lay any great stress on her sentiments in such matters. He now, therefore, gave a speedy turn to the conversation, and began to talk of affairs below the dignity of this history.

Digitized by Google

BOOK XI

CHAPTER ONE

CONTAINING A VERY POLITE SCENE.

WE will now look back to some personages who, though not the principal characters in this history, have yet made too considerable a figure in it to be abruptly dropt: and these are Colonel James and his lady.

This fond couple never met till dinner the day after the masquerade, when they happened to be alone together in an antechamber before the arrival of the rest of the company.

The conversation began with the colonel's saying, "I hope, madam, you got no cold last night at the masquerade." To which the lady answered by much the same kind of question.

They then sat together near five minutes without opening their mouths to each other. At last Mrs. James said, "Pray, sir, who was that masque with you in the dress of a shepherdess? How could you expose yourself by walking with such a trollop in public; for certainly no woman of any figure would appear there in such a dress? You know, Mr. James, I never interfere with your affairs; but I

Digitized by Google

would, methinks, for my own sake, if I was you, preserve a little decency in the face of the world."

"Upon my word," said James, "I do not know whom you mean. A woman in such a dress might speak to me for aught I know. A thousand people speak to me at a masquerade. But, I promise you, I spoke to no woman acquaintance there that I know of. Indeed, I now recollect there was a woman in a dress of a shepherdess; and there was another aukward thing in a blue domino that plagued me a little, but I soon got rid of them."

"And I suppose you do not know the lady in the blue domino neither?"

"Not I, I assure you," said James. "But pray, why do you ask me these questions? it looks so like jealousy."

"Jealousy!" cries she; "I jealous! no, Mr. James, I shall never be jealous, I promise you, especially of the lady in the blue domino; for, to my knowledge, she despises you of all human race."

"I am heartily glad of it," said James; "for I never saw such a tall aukward monster in my life."

"That is a very cruel way of telling me you knew me."

"You, madam!" said James; "you was in a black domino."

"It is not so unusual a thing, I believe, you yourself know, to change dresses. I own I did it to discover some of your tricks. I did not think you could have distinguished the tall aukward monster so well."

"Upon my soul," said James, "if it was you I did

Digitized by Google

not even suspect it; so you ought not to be offended at what I have said ignorantly."

"Indeed, sir," cries she, "you cannot offend me by anything you can say to my face; no, by my soul, I despise you too much. But I wish, Mr. James, you would not make me the subject of your conversation amongst your wenches. I desire I may not be afraid of meeting them for fear of their insults; that I may not be told by a dirty trollop you make me the subject of your wit amongst them, of which, it seems, I am the favourite topic. Though you have married a tall aukward monster, Mr. James, I think she hath a right to be treated, as your wife, with respect at least: indeed, I shall never require any more; indeed, Mr. James, I never shall. I think a wife hath a title to that."

"Who told you this, madam?" said James.

"Your slut," said she; "your wench, your shepherdess."

"By all that's sacred!" cries James, "I do not know who the shepherdess was."

"By all that's sacred then," says she, "she told me so, and I am convinced she told me truth. But I do not wonder at you denying it; for that is equally consistent with honour as to behave in such a manner to a wife who is a gentlewoman. I hope you will allow me that, sir. Because I had not quite so great a fortune I hope you do not think me beneath you, or that you did me any honour in marrying me. I am come of as good a family as yourself, Mr. James; and if my brother knew how you treated me he would not bear it."

Digitized by Google

"Do you threaten me with your brother, madam?" said James.

"I will not be ill-treated, sir," answered she.

"Nor I neither, madam," cries he; "and therefore I desire you will prepare to go into the country to-morrow morning."

"Indeed, sir," said she, "I shall not."

"By heavens! madam, but you shall," answered he: "I will have my coach at the door to-morrow morning by seven; and you shall either go into it or be carried."

"I hope, sir, you are not in earnest," said she.

"Indeed, madam," answered he, "but I am in earnest, and resolved; and into the country you go to-morrow."

"But why into the country," said she, "Mr. James? Why will you be so barbarous to deny me the pleasures of the town?"

"Because you interfere with my pleasures," cried James, "which I have told you long ago I would not submit to. It is enough for fond couples to have these scenes together. I thought we had been upon a better footing, and had cared too little for each other to become mutual plagues. I thought you had been satisfied with the full liberty of doing what you pleased."

"So I am; I defy you to say I have ever given you any uneasiness."

"How!" cries he; "have you not just now upbraided me with what you heard at the masquerade?"

"I own," said she, "to be insulted by such a creature to my face stung me to the soul. I must have

Digitized by Google

had no spirit to bear the insults of such an animal. Nay, she spoke of you with equal contempt. Whoever she is, I promise you Mr. Booth is her favourite. But, indeed, she is unworthy any one's regard, for she behaved like an arrant dragoon."

"Hang her!" cries the colonel, "I know nothing of her."

"Well, but, Mr. James, I am sure you will not send me into the country. Indeed I will not go into the country."

"If you was a reasonable woman," cries James, "perhaps I should not desire it. And on one consideration —"

"Come, name your consideration," said she.

"Let me first experience your discernment," said he. "Come, Molly, let me try your judgment. Can you guess at any woman of your acquaintance that I like?"

"Sure," said she, "it cannot be Mrs. Booth!"

"And why not Mrs. Booth?" answered he. "Is she not the finest woman in the world?"

"Very far from it," replied she, "in my opinion."

"Pray what faults," said he, "can you find in her?"

"In the first place," cries Mrs. James, "her eyes are too large; and she hath a look with them that I don't know how to describe; but I know I don't like it. Then her eyebrows are too large; therefore, indeed, she doth all in her power to remedy this with her pincers; for if it was not for those her eyebrows would be preposterous. Then her nose, as well proportioned as it is, has a visible scar on one side.

Digitized by Google

Her neck, likewise, is too protuberant for the genteel size, especially as she laces herself: for no woman, in my opinion, can be genteel who is not entirely flat before. And, lastly, she is both too short and too tall. Well, you may laugh, Mr. James, I know what I mean, though I cannot well express it: I mean that she is too tall for a pretty woman and too short for a fine woman. There is such a thing as a kind of insipid medium — a kind of something that is neither one thing nor another. I know not how to express it more clearly; but when I say such a one is a pretty woman, a pretty thing, a pretty creature, you know very well I mean a little woman; and when I say such a one is a very fine woman, a very fine person of a woman, to be sure I must mean a tall woman. Now a woman that is between both is certainly neither the one nor the other."

"Well, I own," said he, "you have explained yourself with great dexterity; but, with all these imperfections, I cannot help liking her."

"That you need not tell me, Mr. James," answered the lady, "for that I knew before you desired me to invite her to your house. And nevertheless, did not I, like an obedient wife, comply with your desires? did I make any objection to the party you proposed for the masquerade, though I knew very well your motive? what can the best of wives do more? to procure you success is not in my power; and, if I may give you my opinion, I believe you will never succeed with her."

"Is her virtue so very impregnable?" said he, with a sneer.

Digitized by Google

"Her virtue," answered Mrs. James, "hath the best guard in the world, which is a most violent love for her husband."

"All pretence and affectation," cries the colonel. "It is impossible she should have so little taste, or indeed so little delicacy, as to like such a fellow."

"Nay, I do not much like him myself," said she. "He is not indeed at all such a sort of man as I should like; but I thought he had been generally allowed to be handsome."

"He handsome!" cries James. "What, with a nose like the proboscis of an elephant, with the shoulders of a porter, and the legs of a chairman? The fellow hath not in the least the look of a gentleman, and one would rather think he had followed the plough than the camp all his life."

"Nay, now I protest," said she, "I think you do him injustice. He is genteel enough in my opinion. It is true, indeed, he is not quite of the most delicate make; but, whatever he is, I am convinced she thinks him the finest man in the world."

"I cannot believe it," answered he peevishly; "but will you invite her to dinner here to-morrow?"

"With all my heart, and as often as you please," answered she. "But I have some favours to ask of you. First, I must hear no more of going out of town till I please."

"Very well," cries he.

"In the next place," said she, "I must have two hundred guineas within these two or three days."

Digitized by Google

"Well, I agree to that too," answered he.

"And when I do go out of town, I go to Tunbridge — I insist upon that; and from Tunbridge I go to Bath — positively to Bath. And I promise you faithfully I will do all in my power to carry Mrs. Booth with me."

"On that condition," answered he, "I promise you you shall go wherever you please. And, to shew you, I will even prevent your wishes by my generosity; as soon as I receive the five thousand pounds which I am going to take up on one of my estates, you shall have two hundred more."

She thanked him with a low curtesie; and he was in such good humour that he offered to kiss her. To this kiss she coldly turned her cheek, and then, flirting her fan, said, "Mr. James, there is one thing I forgot to mention to you — I think you intended to get a commission in some regiment abroad for this young man. Now if you would take my advice, I know this will not oblige his wife; and, besides, I am positive she resolves to go with him. But, if you can provide for him in some regiment at home, I know she will dearly love you for it, and when he is ordered to quarters she will be left behind; and Yorkshire or Scotland, I think, is as good a distance as either of the Indies."

"Well, I will do what I can," answered James; "but I cannot ask anything yet; for I got two places of a hundred a year each for two of my footmen, within this fortnight."

At this instant a violent knock at the door signified the arrival of their company, upon which both

Digitized by Google

husband and wife put on their best looks to receive their guests; and, from their behaviour to each other during the rest of the day, a stranger might have concluded he had been in company with the fondest couple in the universe.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER TWO

MATTERS POLITICAL.

BEFORE we return to Booth we will relate a scene in which Dr. Harrison was concerned.

This good man, whilst in the country, happened to be in the neighbourhood of a nobleman of his acquaintance, and whom he knew to have very considerable interest with the ministers at that time.

The doctor, who was very well known to this nobleman, took this opportunity of paying him a visit in order to recommend poor Booth to his favour. Nor did he much doubt of his success, the favour he was to ask being a very small one, and to which he thought the service of Booth gave him so just a title.

The doctor's name soon gained him an admission to the presence of this great man, who, indeed, received him with much courtesy and politeness; not so much perhaps, from any particular regard to the sacred function, nor from any respect to the doctor's personal merit, as from some considerations which the reader will perhaps guess anon. After many ceremonials, and some previous discourse on different subjects, the doctor opened the business, and told

Digitized by Google

the great man that he was come to him to solicit a favour for a young gentleman who had been an officer in the army and was now on half-pay. "All the favour I ask, my lord," said he, "is, that this gentleman may be again admitted *ad eundem*. I am convinced your lordship will do me the justice to think I would not ask for a worthless person; but, indeed, the young man I mean hath very extraordinary merit. He was at the siege of Gibraltar, in which he behaved with distinguished bravery, and was dangerously wounded at two several times in the service of his country. I will add that he is at present in great necessity, and hath a wife and several children, for whom he hath no other means of providing; and, if it will recommend him farther to your lordship's favour, his wife, I believe, is one of the best and worthiest of all her sex."

"As to that, my dear doctor," cries the nobleman, "I shall make no doubt. Indeed any service I shall do the gentleman will be upon your account. As to necessity, it is the plea of so many that it is impossible to serve them all. And with regard to the personal merit of these inferior officers, I believe I need not tell you that it is very little regarded. But if you recommend him, let the person be what he will, I am convinced it will be done; for I know it is in your power at present to ask for a greater matter than this."

"I depend entirely upon your lordship," answered the doctor.

"Indeed, my worthy friend," replied the lord, "I will not take a merit to myself which will so little belong to me. You are to depend on yourself. It

Digitized by Google

falls out very luckily too at this time, when you have it in your power so greatly to oblige us."

"What, my lord, is in my power?" cries the doctor.

"You certainly know," answered his lordship, "how hard Colonel Trompington is run at your town in the election of a mayor; they tell me it will be a very near thing unless you join us. But we know it is in your power to do the business, and turn the scale. I heard your name mentioned the other day on that account, and I know you may have anything in reason if you will give us your interest."

"Sure, my lord," cries the doctor, "you are not in earnest in asking my interest for the colonel?"

"Indeed I am," answered the peer; "why should you doubt it?"

"For many reasons," answered the doctor. "First, I am an old friend and acquaintance of Mr. Fairfield, as your lordship, I believe, very well knows. The little interest, therefore, that I have, you may be assured, will go in his favour. Indeed, I do not concern myself deeply in these affairs, for I do not think it becomes my cloth so to do. But, as far as I think it decent to interest myself, it will certainly be on the side of Mr. Fairfield. Indeed, I should do so if I was acquainted with both the gentlemen only by reputation; the one being a neighbouring gentleman of a very large estate, a very sober and sensible man, of known probity and attachment to the true interest of his country; the other is a mere stranger, a boy, a soldier of fortune, and, as far as

Digitized by Google

I can discern from the little conversation I have had with him, of a very shallow capacity, and no education."

"No education, my dear friend!" cries the nobleman. "Why, he hath been educated in half the courts of Europe."

"Perhaps so, my lord," answered the doctor; "but I shall always be so great a pedant as to call a man of no learning a man of no education. And, from my own knowledge, I can aver that I am persuaded there is scarce a foot-soldier in the army who is more illiterate than the colonel."

"Why, as to Latin and Greek, you know," replied the lord, "they are not much required in the army."

"It may be so," said the doctor. "Then let such persons keep to their own profession. It is a very low civil capacity indeed for which an illiterate man can be qualified. And, to speak a plain truth, if your lordship is a friend to the colonel, you would do well to advise him to decline an attempt in which I am certain he hath no probability of success."

"Well, sir," said the lord, "if you are resolved against us, I must deal as freely with you, and tell you plainly I cannot serve you in your affair. Nay, it will be the best thing I can do to hold my tongue; for, if I should mention his name with your recommendation after what you have said, he would perhaps never get provided for as long as he lives."

"Is his own merit, then, my lord, no recommendation?" cries the doctor.

"My dear, dear sir," cries the other, "what is the merit of a subaltern officer?"

Digitized by Google

"Surely, my lord," cries the doctor, "it is the merit which should recommend him to the post of a subaltern officer. And it is a merit which will hereafter qualify him to serve his country in a higher capacity. And I do assure of this young man, that he hath not only a good heart but a good head too. And I have been told by those who are judges that he is, for his age, an excellent officer."

"Very probably!" cries my lord. "And there are abundance with the same merit and the same qualifications who want a morsel of bread for themselves and their families."

"It is an infamous scandal on the nation," cries the doctor; "and I am heartily sorry it can be said even with a colour of truth."

"How can it be otherwise?" says the peer. "Do you think it is possible to provide for all men of merit?"

"Yes, surely do I," said the doctor; "and very easily too."

"How, pray?" cries the lord. "Upon my word, I shall be glad to know."

"Only by not providing for those who have none. The men of merit in any capacity are not, I am afraid, so extremely numerous that we need starve any of them, unless we wickedly suffer a set of worthless fellows to eat their bread."

"This is all mere Utopia," cries his lordship; "the chimerical system of Plato's commonwealth, with which we amused ourselves at the university; politics which are inconsistent with the state of human affairs."

Digitized by Google

"Sure, my lord," cries the doctor, "we have read of states where such doctrines have been put in practice. What is your lordship's opinion of Rome in the earlier ages of the commonwealth, of Sparta, and even of Athens itself in some periods of its history?"

"Indeed, doctor," cries the lord, "all these notions are obsolete and long since exploded. To apply maxims of government drawn from the Greek and Roman histories to this nation is absurd and impossible. But, if you will have Roman examples, fetch them from those times of the republic that were most like our own. Do you not know, doctor, that this is as corrupt a nation as ever existed under the sun? And would you think of governing such a people by the strict principles of honesty and morality?"

"If it be so corrupt," said the doctor, "I think it is high time to amend it: or else it is easy to foresee that Roman and British liberty will have the same fate; for corruption in the body politic as naturally tends to dissolution as in the natural body."

"I thank you for your simile," cries my lord; "for, in the natural body, I believe, you will allow there is the season of youth, the season of manhood, and the season of old age; and that, when the last of these arrives, it will be an impossible attempt by all the means of art to restore the body again to its youth, or to the vigour of its middle age. The same periods happen to every great kingdom. In its youth it rises by arts and arms to power and prosperity. This it enjoys and flourishes with a while; and then it may be said to be in the vigour of its age, enriched at home with all the emoluments and blessings

Digitized by Google

of peace, and formidable abroad with all the terrors of war. At length this very prosperity introduces corruption, and then comes on its old age. Virtue and learning, art and industry, decay by degrees. The people sink into sloth and luxury and prostitution. It is enervated at home — becomes contemptible abroad; and such indeed is its misery and wretchedness, that it resembles a man in the last decrepit stage of life, who looks with unconcern at his approaching dissolution."

"This is a melancholy picture indeed," cries the doctor; "and, if the latter part of it can be applied to our case, I see nothing but religion, which would have prevented this decrepit state of the constitution, should prevent a man of spirit from hanging himself out of the way of so wretched a contemplation."

"Why so?" said the peer; "why hang myself, doctor? Would it not be wiser, think you, to make the best of your time, and the most you can, in such a nation?"

"And is religion, then, to be really laid out of the question?" cries the doctor.

"If I am to speak my own opinion, sir," answered the peer, "you know I shall answer in the negative. But you are too well acquainted with the world to be told that the conduct of politicians is not formed upon the principles of religion."

"I am very sorry for it," cries the doctor; "but I will talk to them then of honour and honesty; this is a language which I hope they will at least pretend to understand. Now to deny a man the preferment which he merits, and to give it to another man who

Digitized by Google

doth not merit it, is a manifest act of injustice, and is consequently inconsistent with both honour and honesty. Nor is it only an act of injustice to the man himself, but to the public, for whose good principally all public offices are, or ought to be, instituted. Now this good can never be completed nor obtained but by employing all persons according to their capacities. Wherever true merit is liable to be superseded by favour and partiality, and men are intrusted with offices without any regard to capacity or integrity, the affairs of that state will always be in a deplorable situation. Such, as Livy tells us, was the state of Capua a little before its final destruction, and the consequence your lordship well knows. But, my lord, there is another mischief which attends this kind of injustice, and that is, it hath a manifest tendency to destroy all virtue and all ability among the people, by taking away all that encouragement and incentive which should promote emulation and raise men to aim at excelling in any art, science, or profession. Nor can anything, my lord, contribute more to render a nation contemptible among its neighbours; for what opinion can other countries have of the councils, or what terror can they conceive of the arms, of such a people? and it was chiefly owing to the avoiding this error that Oliver Cromwell carried the reputation of England higher than it ever was at any other time. I will add only one argument more, and that is founded on the most narrow and selfish system of politics; and this is, that such a conduct is sure to create universal discontent and grumbling at home;

Digitized by Google

for nothing can bring men to rest satisfied, when they see others preferred to them, but an opinion that they deserved that elevation; for, as one of the greatest men this country ever produced observes,

> One worthless man that gains what he pretends
> Disgusts a thousand unpretending friends.

With what heart-burnings then must any nation see themselves obliged to contribute to the support of a set of men of whose incapacity to serve them they are well apprized, and who do their country a double diskindness, by being themselves employed in posts to which they are unequal, and by keeping others out of those employments for which they are qualified!"

"And do you really think, doctor," cries the nobleman, "that any minister could support himself in this country upon such principles as you recommend? Do you think he would be able to baffle an opposition unless he should oblige his friends by conferring places often contrary to his own inclinations and his own opinion?"

"Yes, really do I," cries the doctor. "Indeed, if a minister is resolved to make good his confession in the liturgy, *by leaving undone all those things which he ought to have done, and by doing all those things which he ought not to have done*, such a minister, I grant, will be obliged to baffle opposition, as you are pleased to term it, by these arts; for, as Shakespeare somewhere says,

> Things ill begun strengthen themselves by ill.

But if, on the contrary, he will please to consider the true interest of his country, and that only in

Digitized by Google

great and national points; if he will engage his country in neither alliances nor quarrels but where it is really interested; if he will raise no money but what is wanted, nor employ any civil or military officers but what are useful, and place in these employments men of the highest integrity, and of the greatest abilities; if he will employ some few of his hours to advance our trade, and some few more to regulate our domestic government; if he would do this, my lord, I will answer for it, he shall either have no opposition to baffle, or he shall baffle it by a fair appeal to his conduct. Such a minister may, in the language of the law, put himself on his country when he pleases, and he shall come off with honour and applause."

"And do you really believe, doctor," cries the peer, "there ever was such a minister, or ever will be?"

"Why not, my lord?" answered the doctor. "It requires no very extraordinary parts, nor any extraordinary degree of virtue. He need practise no great instances of self-denial. He shall have power, and honour, and riches, and, perhaps, all in a much greater degree than he can ever acquire by pursuing a contrary system. He shall have more of each and much more of safety."

"Pray, doctor," said my lord, "let me ask you one simple question. Do you really believe any man upon earth was ever a rogue out of choice?"

"Really, my lord," says the doctor, "I am ashamed to answer in the affirmative; and yet I am afraid experience would almost justify me if I should. Perhaps the opinion of the world may sometimes mislead men to think those measures necessary which

Digitized by Google

in reality are not so. Or the truth may be, that a man of good inclinations finds his office filled with such corruption by the iniquity of his predecessors, that he may despair of being capable of purging it; and so sits down contented, as Augeas did with the filth of his stables, not because he thought them the better, or that such filth was really necessary to a stable, but that he despaired of sufficient force to cleanse them."

"I will ask you one question more, and I have done," said the nobleman. "Do you imagine that if any minister was really as good as you would have him, that the people in general would believe that he was so?"

"Truly, my lord," said the doctor, "I think they may be justified in not believing too hastily. But I beg leave to answer your lordship's question by another. Doth your lordship believe that the people of Greenland, when they see the light of the sun and feel his warmth, after so long a season of cold and darkness, will really be persuaded that he shines upon them?"

My lord smiled at the conceit; and then the doctor took an opportunity to renew his suit, to which his lordship answered, "He would promise nothing, and could give him no hopes of success; but you may be assured," said he, with a leering countenance, "I shall do him all the service in my power." A language which the doctor well understood; and soon after took a civil, but not a very ceremonious leave.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER THREE

THE HISTORY OF MR. TRENT.

WE will now return to Mr. Booth and his wife. The former had spent his time very uneasily ever since he had discovered what sort of man he was indebted to; but, lest he should forget it, Mr. Trent thought now proper to remind him in the following letter, which he read the next morning after he had put off the appointment.

"SIR, — I am sorry the necessity of my affairs obliges me to mention that small sum which I had the honour to lend you the other night at play; and which I shall be much obliged to you if you will let me have some time either to-day or to-morrow. I am, sir,

Your most obedient, most humble servant,

GEORGE TRENT."

This letter a little surprized Booth, after the genteel, and, indeed, as it appeared, generous behaviour of Trent. But lest it should have the same effect upon the reader, we will now proceed to account for this, as well as for some other phænomena that have appeared in this history, and which, perhaps, we shall be forgiven for not having opened more largely before.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Trent then was a gentleman possibly of a good family, for it was not certain whence he sprung on the father's side. His mother, who was the only parent he ever knew or heard of, was a single gentlewoman, and for some time carried on the trade of a milliner in Covent-garden. She sent her son, at the age of eight years old, to a charity-school, where he remained till he was of the age of fourteen, without making any great proficiency in learning. Indeed it is not very probable he should; for the master, who, in preference to a very learned and proper man, was chosen by a party into this school, the salary of which was upwards of a hundred pounds a-year, had himself never travelled through the Latin Grammar, and was, in truth, a most consummate blockhead.

At the age of fifteen Mr. Trent was put clerk to an attorney, where he remained a very short time before he took leave of his master; rather, indeed, departed without taking leave; and, having broke open his mother's escritore, and carried off with him all the valuable effects he there found, to the amount of about fifty pounds, he marched off to sea, and went on board a merchantman, whence he was afterwards pressed into a man of war.

In this service he continued above three years; during which time he behaved so ill in his moral character that he twice underwent a very severe discipline for thefts in which he was detected; but at the same time, he behaved so well as a sailor in an engagement with some pirates, that he wiped off all former scores, and greatly recommended himself to his captain.

Digitized by Google

At his return home, he being then about twenty years of age, he found that the attorney had in his absence married his mother, had buried her, and secured all her effects, to the amount, as he was informed, of about fifteen hundred pound. Trent applied to his stepfather, but to no purpose; the attorney utterly disowned him, nor would he suffer him to come a second time within his doors.

It happened that the attorney had, by a former wife, an only daughter, a great favourite, who was about the same age with Trent himself, and had, during his residence at her father's house, taken a very great liking to this young fellow, who was extremely handsome and perfectly well made. This her liking was not, during his absence, so far extinguished but that it immediately revived on his return. Of this she took care to give Mr. Trent proper intimation; for she was not one of those backward and delicate ladies who can die rather than make the first overture. Trent was overjoyed at this, and with reason, for she was a very lovely girl in her person, the only child of a rich father; and the prospect of so complete a revenge on the attorney charmed him above all the rest. To be as short in the matter as the parties, a marriage was soon consummated between them.

The attorney at first raged and was implacable; but at last fondness for his daughter so far overcame resentment that he advanced a sum of money to buy his son-in-law (for now he acknowledged him as such) an ensign's commission in a marching regiment then ordered to Gibraltar; at which place the

Digitized by Google

attorney heartily hoped that Trent might be knocked on the head; for in that case he thought he might marry his daughter more agreeably to his own ambition and to her advantage.

The regiment into which Trent purchased was the same with that in which Booth likewise served; the one being an ensign, and the other a lieutenant, in the two additional companies.

Trent had no blemish in his military capacity. Though he had had but an indifferent education, he was naturally sensible and genteel, and Nature, as we have said, had given him a very agreeable person. He was likewise a very bold fellow, and, as he really behaved himself every way well enough while he was at Gibraltar, there was some degree of intimacy between him and Booth.

When the siege was over, and the additional companies were again reduced, Trent returned to his wife, who received him with great joy and affection. Soon after this an accident happened which proved the utter ruin of his father-in-law, and ended in breaking his heart. This was nothing but making a mistake pretty common at this day, of writing another man's name to a deed instead of his own. In truth this matter was no less than what the law calls forgery, and was just then made capital by an act of parliament. From this offence, indeed, the attorney was acquitted, by not admitting the proof of the party, who was to avoid his own deed by his evidence, and therefore no witness, according to those excellent rules called the law of evidence; a law very excellently calculated for the preservation

Digitized by Google

of the lives of his majesty's roguish subjects, and most notably used for that purpose.

But though by common law the attorney was honourably acquitted, yet, as common sense manifested to every one that he was guilty, he unhappily lost his reputation, and of consequence his business; the chagrin of which latter soon put an end to his life.

This prosecution had been attended with a very great expence; for, besides the ordinary costs of avoiding the gallows by the help of the law, there was a very high article, of no less than a thousand pounds, paid down to remove out of the way a witness against whom there was no legal exception. The poor gentleman had besides suffered some losses in business; so that, to the surprize of all his acquaintance, when his debts were paid there remained no more than a small estate of fourscore pounds a-year, which he settled upon his daughter, far out of the reach of her husband, and about two hundred pounds in money.

The old gentleman had not long been in his grave before Trent set himself to consider seriously of the state of his affairs. He had lately begun to look on his wife with a much less degree of liking and desire than formerly; for he was one of those who think too much of one thing is good for nothing. Indeed, he had indulged these speculations so far, that I believe his wife, though one of the prettiest women in town, was the last subject that he would have chose for any amorous dalliance.

Many other persons, however, greatly differed from him in his opinion. Amongst the rest was the illus-

Digitized by Google

trious peer of amorous memory. This noble peer, having therefore got a view of Mrs. Trent one day in the street, did, by means of an emissary then with him, make himself acquainted with her lodging, to which he immediately laid siege in form, setting himself down in a lodging directly opposite to her, from whence the battery of ogles began to play the very next morning.

This siege had not continued long before the governor of the garrison became sufficiently apprized of all the works which were carrying on, and, having well reconnoitered the enemy, and discovered who he was, notwithstanding a false name and some disguise of his person, he called a council of war within his own breast. In fact, to drop all allegory, he began to consider whether his wife was not really a more valuable possession than he had lately thought her. In short, as he had been disappointed in her fortune, he now conceived some hopes of turning her beauty itself into a fortune.

Without communicating these views to her, he soon scraped an acquaintance with his opposite neighbour by the name which he there usurped, and counterfeited an entire ignorance of his real name and title. On this occasion Trent had his disguise likewise, for he affected the utmost simplicity; of which affectation, as he was a very artful fellow, he was extremely capable.

The peer fell plumb into this snare; and when, by the simplicity, as he imagined, of the husband, he became acquainted with the wife, he was so extravagantly charmed with her person, that he resolved, whatever was the cost or the consequence, he would possess her.

Digitized by Google

His lordship, however, preserved some caution in his management of this affair; more, perhaps, than was necessary. As for the husband, none was requisite, for he knew all he could; and, with regard to the wife herself, as she had for some time perceived the decrease of her husband's affection (for few women are, I believe, to be imposed upon in that matter), she was not displeased to find the return of all that complaisance and endearment, of those looks and languishments, from another agreeable person, which she had formerly received from Trent, and which she now found she should receive from him no longer.

My lord, therefore, having been indulged with as much opportunity as he could wish from Trent, and having received rather more encouragement than he could well have hoped from the lady, began to prepare all matters for a storm, when luckily, Mr. Trent declaring he must go out of town for two days, he fixed on the first day of his departure as the time of carrying his design into execution.

And now, after some debate with himself in what manner he should approach his love, he at last determined to do it in his own person; for he conceived, and perhaps very rightly, that the lady, like Semele, was not void of ambition, and would have preferred Jupiter in all his glory to the same deity in the disguise of an humble shepherd. He dressed himself, therefore, in the richest embroidery of which he was master, and appeared before his mistress arrayed in all the brightness of peerage; a sight whose charms she had not the power to resist, and the consequences are only to be imagined. In short, the same scene

Digitized by Google

which Jupiter acted with his above-mentioned mistress of old was more than beginning, when Trent burst from the closet into which he had conveyed himself, and unkindly interrupted the action.

His lordship presently run to his sword; but Trent, with great calmness, answered, "That, as it was very well known he durst fight, he should not draw his sword on this occasion; for sure," says he, "my lord, it would be the highest imprudence in me to kill a man who is now become so considerably my debtor." At which words he fetched a person from the closet, who had been confined with him, telling him he had done his business, and might now, if he pleased, retire.

It would be tedious here to amuse the reader with all that passed on the present occasion; the rage and confusion of the wife, or the perplexity in which my lord was involved. We will omit therefore all such matters, and proceed directly to business, as Trent and his lordship did soon after. And in the conclusion my lord stipulated to pay a good round sum, and to provide Mr. Trent with a good place on the first opportunity.

On the side of Mr. Trent were stipulated absolute remission of all past, and full indulgence for the time to come.

Trent now immediately took a house at the polite end of the town, furnished it elegantly, and set up his equipage, rigged out both himself and his wife with very handsome cloaths, frequented all public places where he could get admission, pushed himself into acquaintance, and his wife soon afterwards began

Digitized by Google

to keep an assembly, or, in the fashionable phrase, to be at home once a-week; when, by my lord's assistance, she was presently visited by most men of the first rank, and by all such women of fashion as are not very nice in their company.

My lord's amour with this lady lasted not long; for, as we have before observed, he was the most inconstant of all human race. Mrs. Trent's passion was not however of that kind which leads to any very deep resentment of such fickleness. Her passion, indeed, was principally founded upon interest; so that foundation served to support another superstructure; and she was easily prevailed upon, as well as her husband, to be useful to my lord in a capacity which, though very often exerted in the polite world, hath not as yet, to my great surprize, acquired any polite name, or, indeed, any which is not too coarse to be admitted in this history.

After this preface, which we thought necessary to account for a character of which some of my country and collegiate readers might possibly doubt the existence, I shall proceed to what more immediately regards Mrs. Booth. The reader may be pleased to remember that Mr. Trent was present at the assembly to which Booth and his wife were carried by Mrs. James, and where Amelia was met by the noble peer.

His lordship, seeing there that Booth and Trent were old acquaintance, failed not, to use the language of sportsmen, to put Trent upon the scent of Amelia. For this purpose that gentleman visited Booth the very next day, and had pursued him close ever since,

Digitized by Google

By his means, therefore, my lord learned that Amelia was to be at the masquerade, to which place she was dogged by Trent in a sailor's jacket, who, meeting my lord, according to agreement, at the entrance of the opera-house, like the four-legged gentleman of the same vocation, made a dead point, as it is called, at the game.

My lord was so satisfied and delighted with his conversation at the masquerade with the supposed Amelia, and the encouragement which in reality she had given him, that, when he saw Trent the next morning, he embraced him with great fondness, gave him a bank note of a hundred pound, and promised him both the Indies on his success, of which he began now to have no manner of doubt.

The affair that happened at the gaming-table was likewise a scheme of Trent's, on a hint given by my lord to him to endeavour to lead Booth into some scrape or distress; his lordship promising to pay whatever expense Trent might be led into by such means. Upon his lordship's credit, therefore, the money lent to Booth was really advanced. And hence arose all that seeming generosity and indifference as to the payment; Trent being satisfied with the obligation conferred on Booth, by means of which he hoped to effect his purpose.

But now the scene was totally changed; for Mrs. Atkinson, the morning after the quarrel, beginning seriously to recollect that she had carried the matter rather too far, and might really injure Amelia's reputation, a thought to which the warm pursuit of her own interest had a good deal blinded her at the time,

Digitized by Google

resolved to visit my lord himself, and to let him into the whole story; for, as she had succeeded already in her favourite point, she thought she had no reason to fear any consequence of the discovery. This resolution she immediately executed.

Trent came to attend his lordship, just after Mrs. Atkinson had left him. He found the peer in a very ill humour, and brought no news to comfort or recruit his spirits; for he had himself just received a billet from Booth, with an excuse for himself and his wife from accepting the invitation at Trent's house that evening, where matters had been previously concerted for their entertainment, and when his lordship was by accident to drop into the room where Amelia was, while Booth was to be engaged at play in another.

And now after much debate, and after Trent had acquainted my lord with the wretched situation of Booth's circumstances, it was resolved that Trent should immediately demand his money of Booth, and upon his not paying it, for they both concluded it impossible he should pay it, to put the note which Trent had for the money in suit against him by the genteel means of paying it away to a nominal third person; and this they both conceived must end immediately in the ruin of Booth, and, consequently, in the conquest of Amelia.

In this project, and with this hope, both my lord and his setter, or (if the sportsmen please) setting-dog, both greatly exulted; and it was next morning executed, as we have already seen.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTAINING SOME DISTRESS.

TRENT'S letter drove Booth almost to madness. To be indebted to such a fellow at any rate had stuck much in his stomach, and had given him very great uneasiness; but to answer this demand in any other manner than by paying the money was absolutely what he could not bear. Again, to pay this money, he very plainly saw there was but one way, and this was, by stripping his wife, not only of every farthing, but almost of every rag she had in the world; a thought so dreadful that it chilled his very soul with horror: and yet pride, at last, seemed to represent this as the lesser evil of the two.

But how to do this was still a question. It was not sure, at least he feared it was not, that Amelia herself would readily consent to this; and so far from persuading her to such a measure, he could not bear even to propose it. At length his determination was to acquaint his wife with the whole affair, and to ask her consent, by way of asking her advice; for he was well assured she could find no other means of extricating him out of his dilemma. This he accordingly did, representing the affair as bad as he could; though, indeed, it was impossible for him to aggravate the real truth.

Digitized by Google

Amelia heard him patiently, without once interrupting him. When he had finished, she remained silent some time: indeed, the shock she received from this story almost deprived her of the power of speaking. At last she answered, "Well, my dear, you ask my advice; I certainly can give you no other than that the money must be paid."

"But how must it be paid?" cries he. "O, heavens! thou sweetest creature! what, not once upbraid me for bringing this ruin on thee?"

"Upbraid you, my dear!" says she; "would to heaven I could prevent your upbraiding yourself. But do not despair. I will endeavour by some means or other to get you the money."

"Alas! my dear love," cries Booth, "I know the only way by which you can raise it. How can I consent to that? do you forget the fears you so lately expressed of what would be our wretched condition when our little all was mouldered away? O my Amelia! they cut my very heart-strings when you spoke then; for I had then lost this little all. Indeed, I assure you, I have not played since, nor ever will more."

"Keep that resolution," said she, "my dear, and I hope we shall yet recover the past."—At which words, casting her eyes on the children, the tears burst from her eyes, and she cried—"Heaven will, I hope, provide for us."

A pathetic scene now ensued between the husband and wife, which would not, perhaps, please many readers to see drawn at too full a length. It is sufficient to say that this excellent woman not only

Digitized by Google

used her utmost endeavours to stifle and conceal her own concern, but said and did everything in her power to allay that of her husband.

Booth was, at this time, to meet a person whom we have formerly mentioned in the course of our history. This gentleman had a place in the War-office, and pretended to be a man of great interest and consequence; by which means he did not only receive great respect and court from the inferiour officers, but actually bubbled several of their money, by undertaking to do them services which, in reality, were not within his power. In truth, I have known few great men who have not been beset with one or more such fellows as these, through whom the inferior part of mankind are obliged to make their court to the great men themselves; by which means, I believe, principally, persons of real merit have often been deterred from the attempt; for these subaltern coxcombs ever assume an equal state with their masters, and look for an equal degree of respect to be paid to them; to which men of spirit, who are in every light their betters, are not easily brought to submit. These fellows, indeed, themselves have a jealous eye towards all great abilities, and are sure, to the utmost of their power, to keep all who are so endowed from the presence of their masters. They use their masters as bad ministers have sometimes used a prince — they keep all men of merit from his ears, and daily sacrifice his true honour and interest to their own profit and their own vanity.

As soon as Booth was gone to his appointment

Digitized by Google

with this man, Amelia immediately betook herself to her business with the highest resolution. She packed up, not only her own little trinkets, and those of the children, but the greatest part of her own poor cloathes (for she was but barely provided), and then drove in a hackney-coach to the same pawnbroker's who had before been recommended to her by Mrs. Atkinson, who advanced her the money she desired.

Being now provided with her sum, she returned well pleased home, and her husband coming in soon after, she with much chearfulness delivered him all the money.

Booth was so overjoyed with the prospect of discharging his debt to Trent, that he did not perfectly reflect on the distress to which his family was now reduced. The good-humour which appeared in the countenance of Amelia was, perhaps, another help to stifle those reflexions; but above all, were the assurances he had received from the great man, whom he had met at a coffee-house, and who had promised to do him all the service in his power; which several half-pay subaltern officers assured him was very considerable.

With this comfortable news he acquainted his wife, who either was, or seemed to be, extremely well pleased with it. And now he set out with the money in his pocket to pay his friend Trent, who unluckily for him happened not to be at home.

On his return home he met his old friend the lieutenant, who thankfully paid him his crown, and insisted on his going with him and taking part of a

Digitized by Google

bottle. This invitation was so eager and pressing, that poor Booth, who could not resist much importunity, complied.

While they were over this bottle Booth acquainted his friend with the promises he had received that afternoon at the coffee-house, with which the old gentleman was very well pleased: "For I have heard," says he, "that gentleman hath very powerful interest;" but he informed him likewise that he had heard that the great man must be touched, for that he never did anything without touching. Of this, indeed, the great man himself had given some oblique hints, by saying, with great sagacity and slyness, that he knew where fifty pound might be deposited to much advantage.

Booth answered that he would very readily advance a small sum if he had it in his power, but that at present it was not so, for that he had no more in the world than the sum of fifty pounds, which he owed Trent, and which he intended to pay him the next morning.

"It is very right, undoubtedly, to pay your debts," says the old gentleman; "but sure, on such an occasion, any man but the rankest usurer would be contented to stay a little while for his money; and it will be only a little while I am convinced; for, if you deposit this sum in the great man's hands, I make no doubt but you will succeed immediately in getting your commission; and then I will help you to a method of taking up such a sum as this." The old gentleman persisted in this advice, and backed it with every argument he could invent,

Digitized by Google

declaring, as was indeed true, that he gave the same advice which he would pursue was the case his own.

Booth long rejected the opinion of his friend, till, as they had not argued with dry lips, he became heated with wine, and then at last the old gentleman succeeded. Indeed, such was his love, either for Booth or for his own opinion, and perhaps for both, that he omitted nothing in his power. He even endeavoured to palliate the character of Trent, and unsaid half what he had before said of that gentleman. In the end, he undertook to make Trent easy, and to go to him the very next morning for that purpose.

Poor Booth at last yielded, though with the utmost difficulty. Indeed, had he known quite as much of Trent as the reader doth, no motive whatsoever would have prevailed on him to have taken the old gentleman's advice.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTAINING MORE WORMWOOD AND OTHER INGREDIENTS.

IN the morning Booth communicated the matter to Amelia, who told him she would not presume to advise him in an affair of which he was so much the better judge.

While Booth remained in a doubtful state what conduct to pursue Bound came to make him a visit, and informed him that he had been at Trent's house, but found him not at home, adding that he would pay him a second visit that very day, and would not rest till he found him.

Booth was ashamed to confess his wavering resolution in an affair in which he had been so troublesome to his friend; he therefore dressed himself immediately, and together they both went to wait on the little great man, to whom Booth now hoped to pay his court in the most effectual manner.

Bound had been longer acquainted with the modern methods of business than Booth; he advised his friend, therefore, to begin with tipping (as it is called) the great man's servant. He did so, and by that means got speedy access to the master.

The great man received the money, not as a gudgeon doth a bait, but as a pike receives a poor gudgeon into his maw. To say the truth, such fellows

Digitized by Google

as these may well be likened to that voracious fish, who fattens himself by devouring all the little inhabitants of the river. As soon as the great man had pocketed the cash, he shook Booth by the hand, and told him he would be sure to slip no opportunity of serving him, and would send him word as soon as any offered.

Here I shall stop one moment, and so, perhaps, will my good-natured reader; for surely it must be a hard heart which is not affected with reflecting on the manner in which this poor little sum was raised, and on the manner in which it was bestowed. A worthy family, the wife and children of a man who had lost his blood abroad in the service of his country, parting with their little all, and exposed to cold and hunger, to pamper such a fellow as this!

And if any such reader as I mention should happen to be in reality a great man, and in power, perhaps the horrour of this picture may induce him to put a final end to this abominable practice of touching, as it is called; by which, indeed, a set of leeches are permitted to suck the blood of the brave and the indigent, of the widow and the orphan.

Booth now returned home, where he found his wife with Mrs. James. Amelia had, before the arrival of her husband, absolutely refused Mrs. James's invitation to dinner the next day; but when Booth came in the lady renewed her application, and that in so pressing a manner, that Booth seconded her; for, though he had enough of jealousy in his temper, yet such was his friendship to the colonel, and such his gratitude to the obligations which he had received

Digitized by Google

from him, that his own unwillingness to believe anything of him, co-operating with Amelia's endeavours to put everything in the fairest light, had brought him to acquit his friend of any ill design. To this, perhaps, the late affair concerning my lord had moreover contributed; for it seems to me that the same passion cannot much energize on two different objects at one and the same time: an observation which, I believe, will hold as true with regard to the cruel passions of jealousy and anger as to the gentle passion of love, in which one great and mighty object is sure to engage the whole passion.

When Booth grew importunate, Amelia answered, "My dear, I should not refuse you whatever was in my power; but this is absolutely out of my power; for since I must declare the truth, I cannot dress myself."

"Why so?" said Mrs. James. "I am sure you are in good health."

"Is there no other impediment to dressing but want of health, madam?" answered Amelia.

"Upon my word, none that I know of," replied Mrs. James.

"What do you think of want of cloathes, madam?" said Amelia.

"Ridiculous!" cries Mrs. James. "What need have you to dress yourself out? You will see nobody but our own family, and I promise you I don't expect it. A plain night-gown will do very well."

"But if I must be plain with you, madam," said Amelia, "I have no other cloathes but what I have now on my back. I have not even a clean shift in the world; for you must know, my dear," said she to

Digitized by Google

Booth, "that little Betty is walked off this morning, and hath carried all my linen with her."

"How, my dear?" cries Booth; "little Betty robbed you?"

"It is even so," answered Amelia. Indeed, she spoke truth; for little Betty, having perceived the evening before that her mistress was moving her goods, was willing to lend all the assistance in her power, and had accordingly moved off early that morning, taking with her whatever she could lay her hands on.

Booth expressed himself with some passion on the occasion, and swore he would make an example of the girl. "If the little slut be above ground," cried he, "I will find her out, and bring her to justice."

"I am really sorry for this accident," said Mrs. James, "and (though I know not how to mention it) I beg you 'll give me leave to offer you any linen of mine till you can make new of your own."

Amelia thanked Mrs. James, but declined the favour, saying, she should do well enough at home; and that, as she had no servant now to take care of her children, she could not, nor would not, leave them on any account.

"Then bring master and miss with you," said Mrs. James. "You shall positively dine with us to-morrow."

"I beg, madam, you will mention it no more," said Amelia; "for, besides the substantial reasons I have already given, I have some things on my mind at present which make me unfit for company; and I am resolved nothing shall prevail on me to stir from home."

Digitized by Google

Mrs. James had carried her invitation already to the very utmost limits of good breeding, if not beyond them. She desisted therefore from going any further, and, after some short stay longer, took her leave, with many expressions of concern, which, however, great as it was, left her heart and her mouth together before she was out of the house.

Booth now declared that he would go in pursuit of little Betty, against whom he vowed so much vengeance, that Amelia endeavoured to moderate his anger by representing to him the girl's youth, and that this was the first fault she had ever been guilty of. "Indeed," says she, "I should be very glad to have my things again, and I would have the girl too punished in some degree, which might possibly be for her own good; but I tremble to think of taking away her life;" for Booth in his rage had sworn he would hang her.

"I know the tenderness of your heart, my dear," said Booth, "and I love you for it; but I must beg leave to dissent from your opinion. I do not think the girl in any light an object of mercy. She is not only guilty of dishonesty but of cruelty; for she must know our situation and the very little we had left. She is besides guilty of ingratitude to you, who have treated her with so much kindness, that you have rather acted the part of a mother than of a mistress. And, so far from thinking her youth an excuse, I think it rather an aggravation. It is true, indeed, there are faults which the youth of the party very strongly recommends to our pardon. Such are all those which proceed from carelessness and want

Digitized by Google

of thought; but crimes of this black dye, which are committed with deliberation, and imply a bad mind, deserve a more severe punishment in a young person than in one of riper years; for what must the mind be in old age which hath acquired such a degree of perfection in villany so very early? Such persons as these it is really a charity to the public to put out of the society; and, indeed, a religious man would put them out of the world for the sake of themselves; for whoever understands anything of human nature must know that such people, the longer they live, the more they will accumulate vice and wickedness."

"Well, my dear," cries Amelia, "I cannot argue with you on these subjects. I shall always submit to your superior judgment, and I know you too well to think that you will ever do anything cruel."

Booth then left Amelia to take care of her children, and went in pursuit of the thief.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SIX

A SCENE OF THE TRAGIC KIND.

HE had not been long gone before a thundering knock was heard at the door of the house where Amelia lodged, and presently after a figure all pale, ghastly, and almost breathless, rushed into the room where she then was with her children.

This figure Amelia soon recognised to be Mrs. Atkinson, though indeed she was so disguised that at her first entrance Amelia scarce knew her. Her eyes were sunk in her head, her hair dishevelled, and not only her dress but every feature in her face was in the utmost disorder.

Amelia was greatly shocked at this sight, and the little girl was much frightened; as for the boy, he immediately knew her, and, running to Amelia, he cried, "La! mamma, what is the matter with poor Mrs. Atkinson?"

As soon as Mrs. Atkinson recovered her breath she cried out, "O, Mrs. Booth! I am the most miserable of women — I have lost the best of husbands."

Amelia, looking at her with all the tenderness imaginable, forgetting, I believe, that there had ever been any quarrel between them, said — "Good Heavens, madam, what 's the matter?"

Digitized by Google

"O, Mrs. Booth!" answered she, "I fear I have lost my husband: the doctor says there is but little hope of his life. O, madam! however I have been in the wrong, I am sure you will forgive me and pity me. I am sure I am severely punished; for to that cursed affair I owe all my misery."

"Indeed, madam," cries Amelia, "I am extremely concerned for your misfortune. But pray tell me, hath anything happened to the serjeant?"

"O, madam!" cries she, "I have the greatest reason to fear I shall lose him. The doctor hath almost given him over — he says he hath scarce any hopes. O, madam! that evening that the fatal quarrel happened between us my dear captain took it so to heart that he sat up all night and drank a whole bottle of brandy. Indeed, he said he wished to kill himself; for nothing could have hurt him so much in the world, he said, as to have any quarrel between you and me. His concern, and what he drank together, threw him into a high fever. So that, when I came home from my lord's — (for indeed, madam, I have been, and set all to rights — your reputation is now in no danger) — when I came home, I say, I found the poor man in a raving delirious fit, and in that he hath continued ever since till about an hour ago, when he came perfectly to his senses; but now he says he is sure he shall die, and begs for Heaven's sake to see you first. Would you, madam, would you have the goodness to grant my poor captain's desire? consider he is a dying man, and neither he nor I shall ever ask you a second favour. He says he hath something to say

Digitized by Google

to you that he can mention to no other person, and that he cannot die in peace unless he sees you."

"Upon my word, madam," cries Amelia, "I am extremely concerned at what you tell me. I knew the poor serjeant from his infancy, and always had an affection for him, as I think him to be one of the best-natured and honestest creatures upon earth. I am sure if I could do him any service — but of what use can my going be?"

"Of the highest in the world," answered Mrs. Atkinson. "If you knew how earnestly he entreated it, how his poor breaking heart begged to see you, you would not refuse."

"Nay, I do not absolutely refuse," cries Amelia. "Something to say to me of consequence, and that he could not die in peace unless he said it! did he say that, Mrs. Atkinson?"

"Upon my honour he did," answered she, "and much more than I have related."

"Well, I will go with you," cries Amelia. "I cannot guess what this should be; but I will go."

Mrs. Atkinson then poured out a thousand blessings and thanksgivings; and, taking hold of Amelia's hand, and eagerly kissing it, cried out, "How could that fury passion drive me to quarrel with such a creature?"

Amelia told her she had forgiven and forgot it; and then, calling up the mistress of the house, and committing to her the care of the children, she cloaked herself up as well as she could and set out with Mrs. Atkinson.

When they arrived at the house, Mrs. Atkinson

Digitized by Google

said she would go first and give the captain some notice; for that, if Amelia entered the room unexpectedly, the surprize might have an ill effect. She left therefore Amelia in the parlour, and proceeded directly upstairs.

Poor Atkinson, weak and bad as was his condition, no sooner heard that Amelia was come than he discovered great joy in his countenance, and presently afterwards she was introduced to him.

Atkinson exerted his utmost strength to thank her for this goodness to a dying man (for so he called himself). He said he should not have presumed to give her this trouble, had he not had something which he thought of consequence to say to her, and which he could not mention to any other person. He then desired his wife to give him a little box, of which he always kept the key himself, and afterwards begged her to leave the room for a few minutes; at which neither she nor Amelia expressed any dissatisfaction.

When he was alone with Amelia, he spoke as follows: "This, madam, is the last time my eyes will ever behold what — do pardon me, madam, I will never offend you more." Here he sunk down in his bed, and the tears gushed from his eyes.

"Why should you fear to offend me, Joe?" said Amelia. "I am sure you never did anything willingly to offend me."

"No, madam," answered he, "I would die a thousand times before I would have ventured it in the smallest matter. But — I cannot speak — and yet I must. You cannot pardon me, and yet, per-

Digitized by Google

haps, as I am a dying man, and never shall see you more — indeed, if I was to live after this discovery, I should never dare to look you in the face again; and yet, madam, to think I shall never see you more is worse than ten thousand deaths."

"Indeed, Mr. Atkinson," cries Amelia, blushing, and looking down on the floor, "I must not hear you talk in this manner. If you have anything to say, tell it me, and do not be afraid of my anger; for I think I may promise to forgive whatever it was possible you should do."

"Here then, madam," said he, "is your picture; I stole it when I was eighteen years of age, and have kept it ever since. It is set in gold, with three little diamonds; and yet I can truly say it was not the gold nor the diamonds which I stole — it was the face, which, if I had been the emperor of the world — "

"I must not hear any more of this," said she. "Comfort yourself, Joe, and think no more of this matter. Be assured, I freely and heartily forgive you — But pray compose yourself; come, let me call in your wife."

"First, madam, let me beg one favour," cried he: "consider it is the last, and then I shall die in peace — let me kiss that hand before I die."

"Well, nay," says she, "I don't know what I am doing — well — there." She then carelessly gave him her hand, which he put gently to his lips, and then presently let it drop, and fell back in the bed.

Amelia now summoned Mrs. Atkinson, who was indeed no further off than just without the door.

Digitized by Google

She then hastened down-stairs, and called for a great glass of water, which having drank off, she threw herself into a chair, and the tears ran plentifully from her eyes with compassion for the poor wretch she had just left in his bed.

To say the truth, without any injury to her chastity, that heart, which had stood firm as a rock to all the attacks of title and equipage, of finery and flattery, and which all the treasures of the universe could not have purchased, was yet a little softened by the plain, honest, modest, involuntary, delicate, heroic passion of this poor and humble swain; for whom, in spite of herself, she felt a momentary tenderness and complacence, at which Booth, if he had known it, would perhaps have been displeased.

Having staid some time in the parlour, and not finding Mrs. Atkinson come down (for indeed her husband was then so bad she could not quit him), Amelia left a message with the maid of the house for her mistress, purporting that she should be ready to do anything in her power to serve her, and then left the house with a confusion on her mind that she had never felt before, and which any chastity that is not hewn out of marble must feel on so tender and delicate an occasion.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SEVEN

IN WHICH MR. BOOTH MEETS WITH MORE THAN ONE ADVENTURE.

BOOTH, having hunted for about two hours, at last saw a young lady in a tattered silk gown stepping out of a shop in Monmouth-street into a hackney-coach. This lady, notwithstanding the disguise of her dress, he presently discovered to be no other than little Betty.

He instantly gave the alarm of stop thief, stop coach! upon which Mrs. Betty was immediately stopt in her vehicle, and Booth and his myrmidons laid hold of her.

The girl no sooner found that she was seised by her master than the consciousness of her guilt overpowered her; for she was not yet an experienced offender, and she immediately confessed her crime.

She was then carried before a justice of peace, where she was searched, and there was found in her possession four shillings and sixpence in money, besides the silk gown, which was indeed proper furniture for rag-fair, and scarce worth a single farthing, though the honest shopkeeper in Monmouth-street had sold it for a crown to the simple girl.

The girl, being examined by the magistrate, spoke as follows: — "Indeed, sir, an't please your worship,

Digitized by Google

I am very sorry for what I have done; and to be sure, an't please your honour, my lord, it must have been the devil that put me upon it; for to be sure, please your majesty, I never thought upon such a thing in my whole life before, any more than I did of my dying-day; but, indeed, sir, an't please your worship—"

She was running on in this manner when the justice interrupted her, and desired her to give an account of what she had taken from her master, and what she had done with it.

"Indeed, an't please your majesty," said she, "I took no more than two shifts of madam's, and I pawned them for five shillings, which I gave for the gown that's upon my back; and as for the money in my pocket, it is every farthing of it my own. I am sure I intended to carry back the shifts too as soon as ever I could get money to take them out."

The girl having told them where the pawnbroker lived, the justice sent to him, to produce the shifts, which he presently did; for he expected that a warrant to search his house would be the consequence of his refusal.

The shifts being produced, on which the honest pawnbroker had lent five shillings, appeared plainly to be worth above thirty; indeed, when new they had cost much more: so that, by their goodness as well as by their size, it was certain they could not have belonged to the girl. Booth grew very warm against the pawnbroker. "I hope, sir," said he to the justice, "there is some punishment for this fel-

Digitized by Google

low likewise, who so plainly appears to have known that these goods were stolen. The shops of these fellows may indeed be called the fountains of theft; for it is in reality the encouragement which they meet with from these receivers of their goods that induces men very often to become thieves, so that these deserve equal if not severer punishment than the thieves themselves."

The pawnbroker protested his innocence, and denied the taking in the shifts. Indeed, in this he spoke truth, for he had slipt into an inner room, as was always his custom on these occasions, and left a little boy to do the business; by which means he had carried on the trade of receiving stolen goods for many years with impunity, and had been twice acquitted at the Old Bailey, though the juggle appeared upon the most manifest evidence.

As the justice was going to speak he was interrupted by the girl, who, falling upon her knees to Booth, with many tears begged his forgiveness.

"Indeed, Betty," cries Booth, "you do not deserve forgiveness; for you know very good reasons why you should not have thought of robbing your mistress, particularly at this time. And what further aggravates your crime is, that you robbed the best and kindest mistress in the world. Nay, you are not only guilty of felony, but of a felonious breach of trust, for you know very well everything your mistress had was intrusted to your care."

Now it happened, by very great accident, that the justice before whom the girl was brought understood the law. Turning therefore to Booth, he said, "Do

Digitized by Google

you say, sir, that this girl was intrusted with the shifts?"

"Yes, sir," said Booth, "she was intrusted with everything."

"And will you swear that the goods stolen," said the justice, "are worth forty shillings?"

"No, indeed, sir," answered Booth, "nor that they are worthy thirty either."

"Then, sir," cries the justice, "the girl cannot be guilty of felony."

"How, sir," said Booth, "is it not a breach of trust? and is not a breach of trust felony, and the worst felony too?"

"No, sir," answered the justice; "a breach of trust is no crime in our law, unless it be in a servant; and then the act of parliament requires the goods taken to be of the value of forty shillings."

"So then a servant," cries Booth, "may rob his master of thirty-nine shillings whenever he pleases, and he can't be punished."

"If the goods are under his care, he can't," cries the justice.

"I ask your pardon, sir," says Booth. "I do not doubt what you say; but sure this is a very extraordinary law."

"Perhaps I think so too," said the justice; "but it belongs not to my office to make or to mend laws. My business is only to execute them. If therefore the case be as you say, I must discharge the girl."

"I hope, however, you will punish the pawnbroker," cries Booth.

"If the girl is discharged," cries the justice, "so

Digitized by Google

must be the pawnbroker; for, if the goods are not stolen, he cannot be guilty of receiving them knowing them to be stolen. And, besides, as to his offence, to say the truth, I am almost weary of prosecuting it; for such are the difficulties laid in the way of this prosecution, that it is almost impossible to convict any one on it. And, to speak my opinion plainly, such are the laws, and such the method of proceeding, that one would almost think our laws were rather made for the protection of rogues than for the punishment of them."

Thus ended this examination: the thief and the receiver went about their business, and Booth departed in order to go home to his wife.

In his way home Booth was met by a lady in a chair, who, immediately upon seeing him, stopt her chair, bolted out of it, and, going directly up to him, said, "So, Mr. Booth, you have kept your word with me."

The lady was no other than Miss Matthews, and the speech she meant was of a promise made to her at the masquerade of visiting her within a day or two; which, whether he ever intended to keep I cannot say, but, in truth, the several accidents that had since happened to him had so discomposed his mind that he had absolutely forgot it.

Booth, however, was too sensible and too well-bred to make the excuse of forgetfulness to a lady; nor could he readily find any other. While he stood therefore hesitating, and looking not over-wise, Miss Matthews said, "Well, sir, since by your confusion I see you have some grace left, I will pardon you on

Digitized by Google

one condition, and that is that you will sup with me this night. But, if you fail me now, expect all the revenge of an injured woman." She then bound herself by a most outrageous oath that she would complain to his wife — "And I am sure," says she, "she is so much a woman of honour as to do me justice. And, though I miscarried in my first attempt, be assured I will take care of my second."

Booth asked what she meant by her first attempt; to which she answered that she had already writ his wife an account of his ill-usage of her, but that she was pleased it had miscarried. She then repeated her asseveration that she would now do it effectually if he disappointed her.

This threat she reckoned would most certainly terrify poor Booth; and, indeed, she was not mistaken; for I believe it would have been impossible, by any other menace or by any other means, to have brought him once even to balance in his mind on this question. But by this threat she prevailed; and Booth promised, upon his word and honour, to come to her at the hour she appointed. After which she took leave of him with a squeeze by the hand, and a smiling countenance, and walked back to her chair.

But, however she might be pleased with having obtained this promise, Booth was far from being delighted with the thoughts of having given it. He looked, indeed, upon the consequences of this meeting with horrour; but as to the consequence which was so apparently intended by the lady, he resolved against it. At length he came to this determination, to go according to his appointment, to argue the

Digitized by Google

matter with the lady, and to convince her, if possible, that, from a regard to his honour only, he must discontinue her acquaintance. If this failed to satisfy her, and she still persisted in her threats to acquaint his wife with the affair, he then resolved, whatever pains it cost him, to communicate the whole truth himself to Amelia, from whose goodness he doubted not but to obtain an absolute remission.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER EIGHT

IN WHICH AMELIA APPEARS IN A LIGHT MORE AMIABLE THAN GAY.

WE will now return to Amelia, whom we left in some perturbation of mind departing from Mrs. Atkinson.

Though she had before walked through the streets in a very improper dress with Mrs. Atkinson, she was unwilling, especially as she was alone, to return in the same manner. Indeed, she was scarce able to walk in her present condition; for the case of poor Atkinson had much affected her tender heart, and her eyes had overflown with many tears.

It occurred likewise to her at present that she had not a single shilling in her pocket or at home to provide food for herself and her family. In this situation she resolved to go immediately to the pawnbroker whither she had gone before, and to deposit her picture for what she could raise upon it. She then immediately took a chair and put her design in execution.

The intrinsic value of the gold in which this picture was set, and of the little diamonds which surrounded it, amounted to nine guineas. This therefore was advanced to her, and the prettiest

Digitized by Google

face in the world (such is often the fate of beauty) was deposited, as of no value, into the bargain.

When she came home she found the following letter from Mrs. Atkinson: —

"My dearest Madam, — As I know your goodness, I could not delay a moment acquainting you with the happy turn of my affairs since you went. The doctor, on his return to visit my husband, has assured me that the captain was on the recovery, and in very little danger; and I really think he is since mended. I hope to wait on you soon with better news. Heaven bless you, dear madam! and believe me to be, with the utmost sincerity,

Your most obliged, obedient, humble servant,

Atkinson."

Amelia was really pleased with this letter; and now, it being past four o'clock, she despaired of seeing her husband till the evening. She therefore provided some tarts for her children, and then, eating nothing but a slice of bread and butter herself, she began to prepare for the captain's supper.

There were two things of which her husband was particularly fond, which, though it may bring the simplicity of his taste into great contempt with some of my readers, I will venture to name. These were a fowl and egg sauce and mutton broth; both which Amelia immediately purchased.

As soon as the clock struck seven the good creature went down into the kitchen, and began to exercise her talents of cookery, of which she was a great mistress, as she was of every œconomical office

Digitized by Google

from the highest to the lowest: and, as no woman could outshine her in a drawing-room, so none could make the drawing-room itself shine brighter than Amelia. And, if I may speak a bold truth, I question whether it be possible to view this fine creature in a more amiable light than while she was dressing her husband's supper, with her little children playing round her.

It was now half an hour past eight, and the meat almost ready, the table likewise neatly spread with materials borrowed from her landlady, and she began to grow a little uneasy at Booth's not returning when a sudden knock at the door roused her spirits, and she cried, "There, my dear, there is your good papa;" at which words she darted swiftly upstairs and opened the door to her husband.

She desired her husband to walk up into the dining-room, and she would come to him in an instant; for she was desirous to encrease his pleasure by surprising him with his two favourite dishes. She then went down again to the kitchen, where the maid of the house undertook to send up the supper, and she with her children returned to Booth.

He then told her concisely what had happened with relation to the girl — to which she scarce made any answer, but asked him if he had not dined? He assured her he had not eat a morsel the whole day. "Well," says she, "my dear, I am a fellow-sufferer; but we shall both enjoy our supper the more; for I have made a little provision for you, as I guessed what might be the case. I have got you

Digitized by Google

a bottle of wine too. And here is a clean cloth and a smiling countenance, my dear Will. Indeed, I am in unusual good spirits to-night, and I have made a promise to the children, which you must confirm; I have promised to let them sit up this one night to supper with us. — Nay, don't look so serious: cast off all uneasy thoughts, I have a present for you here — no matter how I came by it." — At which words she put eight guineas into his hand, crying, "Come, my dear Bill, be gay — Fortune will yet be kind to us — at least let us be happy this night. Indeed, the pleasures of many women during their whole lives will not amount to my happiness this night if you will be in good humour."

Booth fetched a deep sigh, and cried, "How unhappy am I, my dear, that I can't sup with you to-night!"

As in the delightful month of June, when the sky is all serene, and the whole face of nature looks with a pleasing and smiling aspect, suddenly a dark cloud spreads itself over the hemisphere, the sun vanishes from our sight, and every object is obscured by a dark and horrid gloom; so happened it to Amelia: the joy that had enlightened every feature disappeared in a moment; the lustre forsook her shining eyes, and all the little loves that played and wantoned in her cheeks hung their drooping heads, and with a faint trembling voice she repeated her husband's words, "Not sup with me to-night, my dear!"

"Indeed, my dear," answered he, "I cannot. I need not tell you how uneasy it makes me, or that

Digitized by Google

I am as much disappointed as yourself; but I am engaged to sup abroad. I have absolutely given my honour; and besides, it is on business of importance."

"My dear," said she, "I say no more. I am convinced you would not willingly sup from me. I own it is a very particular disappointment to me to-night, when I had proposed unusual pleasure; but the same reason which is sufficient to you ought to be so to me."

Booth made his wife a compliment on her ready compliance, and then asked her what she intended by giving him that money, or how she came by it?

"I intend, my dear," said she, "to give it you; that is all. As to the manner in which I came by it, you know, Billy, that is not very material. You are well assured I got it by no means which would displease you; and, perhaps, another time I may tell you."

Booth asked no farther questions; but he returned her, and insisted on her taking, all but one guinea, saying she was the safest treasurer. He then promised her to make all the haste home in his power, and he hoped, he said, to be with her in an hour and half at farthest, and then took his leave.

When he was gone the poor disappointed Amelia sat down to supper with her children, with whose company she was forced to console herself for the absence of her husband.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER NINE

A VERY TRAGIC SCENE.

THE clock had struck eleven, and Amelia was just proceeding to put her children to bed, when she heard a knock at the street-door; upon which the boy cried out, "There 's papa, mamma; pray let me stay and see him before I go to bed." This was a favour very easily obtained; for Amelia instantly ran down-stairs, exulting in the goodness of her husband for returning so soon, though half an hour was already elapsed beyond the time in which he promised to return.

Poor Amelia was now again disappointed; for it was not her husband at the door, but a servant with a letter for him, which he delivered into her hands. She immediately returned up-stairs, and said — "It was not your papa, my dear; but I hope it is one who hath brought us some good news." For Booth had told her that he hourly expected to receive such from the great man, and had desired her to open any letter which came to him in his absence.

Amelia therefore broke open the letter, and read as follows:

"SIR, — After what hath passed between us, I need only tell you that I know you supped this very night

Digitized by Google

alone with Miss Matthews: a fact which will upbraid you sufficiently, without putting me to that trouble, and will very well account for my desiring the favour of seeing you to-morrow in Hyde-park at six in the morning. You will forgive me reminding you once more how inexcusable this behaviour is in you, who are possessed in your own wife of the most inestimable jewel.

Yours, &c.

T. James.

I shall bring pistols with me."

It is not easy to describe the agitation of Amelia's mind when she read this letter. She threw herself into her chair, turned as pale as death, began to tremble all over, and had just power enough left to tap the bottle of wine, which she had hitherto preserved entire for her husband, and to drink off a large bumper.

The little boy perceived the strange symptoms which appeared in his mother; and running to her, he cried, "What 's the matter, my dear mamma? you don't look well! — No harm hath happened to poor papa, I hope — Sure that bad man hath not carried him away again?"

Amelia answered, "No, child, nothing — nothing at all." And then a large shower of tears came to her assistance, which presently after produced the same in the eyes of both the children.

Amelia, after a short silence, looking tenderly at her children, cried out, "It is too much, too much to bear. Why did I bring these little wretches into the world? why were these innocents born to such

Digitized by Google

a fate?" She then threw her arms round them both (for they were before embracing her knees), and cried, "O my children! my children! forgive me, my babes! Forgive me that I have brought you into such a world as this! You are undone — my children are undone!"

The little boy answered with great spirit, "How undone, mamma? my sister and I don't care a farthing for being undone. Don't cry so upon our accounts — we are both very well; indeed we are. But do pray tell us. I am sure some accident hath happened to poor papa."

"Mention him no more," cries Amelia; "your papa is — indeed he is a wicked man — he cares not for any of us. O Heavens! is this the happiness I promised myself this evening?" At which words she fell into an agony, holding both her children in her arms.

The maid of the house now entered the room, with a letter in her hand, which she had received from a porter, whose arrival the reader will not wonder to have been unheard by Amelia in her present condition.

The maid, upon her entrance into the room, perceiving the situation of Amelia, cried out, "Good Heavens! madam, what's the matter?" Upon which Amelia, who had a little recovered herself after the last violent vent of her passion, started up and cried, "Nothing, Mrs. Susan — nothing extraordinary. I am subject to these fits sometimes; but I am very well now. Come, my dear children, I am very well again; indeed I am. You must now

Digitized by Google

go to bed; Mrs. Susan will be so good as to put you to bed."

"But why doth not papa love us?" cries the little boy. "I am sure we have none of us done anything to disoblige him."

This innocent question of the child so stung Amelia that she had the utmost difficulty to prevent a relapse. However, she took another dram of wine; for so it might be called to her, who was the most temperate of women, and never exceeded three glasses on any occasion. In this glass she drank her children's health, and soon after so well soothed and composed them that they went quietly away with Mrs. Susan.

The maid, in the shock she had conceived at the melancholy, indeed frightful scene, which had presented itself to her at her first coming into the room, had quite forgot the letter which she held in her hand. However, just at her departure she recollected it, and delivered it to Amelia, who was no sooner alone than she opened it, and read as follows:

"My dearest, sweetest Love, — I write this from the bailiff's house where I was formerly, and to which I am again brought at the suit of that villain Trent. I have the misfortune to think I owe this accident (I mean that it happened to-night) to my own folly in endeavouring to keep a secret from you. O my dear! had I had resolution to confess my crime to you, your forgiveness would, I am convinced, have cost me only a few blushes, and I had now been happy in your arms. Fool that I was, to leave you on such an account, and

Digitized by Google

to add to a former transgression a new one! — Yet, by Heavens! I mean not a transgression of the like kind; for of that I am not nor ever will be guilty; and when you know the true reason of my leaving you to-night I think you will pity rather than upbraid me. I am sure you would if you knew the compunction with which I left you to go to the most worthless, the most infamous. Do guess the rest — guess that crime with which I cannot stain my paper — but still believe me no more guilty than I am, or, if it will lessen your vexation at what hath befallen me, believe me as guilty as you please, and think me, for a while at least, as undeserving of you as I think myself. This paper and pen are so bad, I question whether you can read what I write: I almost doubt whether I wish you should. Yet this I will endeavour to make as legible as I can. Be comforted, my dear love, and still keep up your spirits with the hopes of better days. The doctor will be in town to-morrow, and I trust on his goodness for my delivery once more from this place, and that I shall soon be able to repay him. That Heaven may bless and preserve you is the prayer of, my dearest love,

Your ever fond, affectionate,
and hereafter, faithful husband,
W. Booth."

Amelia pretty well guessed the obscure meaning of this letter, which, though at another time it might have given her unspeakable torment, was at present rather of the medicinal kind, and served to allay her anguish. Her anger to Booth too began a little to abate, and was softened by her concern for his misfortune. Upon the whole, however, she passed a miserable and sleepless night, her gentle

Digitized by Google

mind torn and distracted with various and contending passions, distressed with doubts, and wandering in a kind of twilight which presented her only objects of different degrees of horror, and where black despair closed at a small distance the gloomy prospect.

Digitized by Google

BOOK XII

CHAPTER ONE

THE BOOK BEGINS WITH POLITE HISTORY.

BEFORE we return to the miserable couple, whom we left at the end of the last book, we will give our reader the more chearful view of the gay and happy family of Colonel James.

Mrs. James, when she could not, as we have seen, prevail with Amelia to accept that invitation which, at the desire of the colonel, she had so kindly and obediently carried her, returned to her husband and acquainted him with the ill success of her embassy; at which, to say the truth, she was almost as much disappointed as the colonel himself; for he had not taken a much stronger liking to Amelia than she herself had conceived for Booth. This will account for some passages which may have a little surprized the reader in the former chapters of this history, as we were not then at leisure to communicate to them a hint of this kind; it was, indeed, on Mr. Booth's account that she had been at the trouble of changing her dress at the masquerade.

But her passions of this sort, happily for her, were not extremely strong; she was therefore easily baulked; and, as she met with no encouragement

Digitized by Google

from Booth, she soon gave way to the impetuosity of Miss Matthews, and from that time scarce thought more of the affair till her husband's design against the wife revived her's likewise; insomuch that her passion was at this time certainly strong enough for Booth, to produce a good hearty hatred for Amelia, whom she now abused to the colonel in very gross terms, both on the account of her poverty and her insolence, for so she termed the refusal of all her offers.

The colonel, seeing no hopes of soon possessing his new mistress, began, like a prudent and wise man, to turn his thoughts towards the securing his old one. From what his wife had mentioned concerning the behaviour of the shepherdess, and particularly her preference of Booth, he had little doubt but that this was the identical Miss Matthews. He resolved therefore to watch her closely, in hopes of discovering Booth's intrigue with her. In this, besides the remainder of affection which he yet preserved for that lady, he had another view, as it would give him a fair pretence to quarrel with Booth; who, by carrying on this intrigue, would have broke his word and honour given to him. And he began now to hate poor Booth heartily, from the same reason from which Mrs. James had contracted her aversion to Amelia.

The colonel therefore employed an inferior kind of pimp to watch the lodgings of Miss Matthews, and to acquaint him if Booth, whose person was known to the pimp, made any visit there.

The pimp faithfully performed his office, and, hav-

Digitized by Google

ing last night made the wished-for discovery, immediately acquainted his master with it.

Upon this news the colonel presently despatched to Booth the short note which we have before seen. He sent it to his own house instead of Miss Matthews's, with hopes of that very accident which actually did happen. Not that he had any ingredient of the bully in him, and desired to be prevented from fighting, but with a prospect of injuring Booth in the affection and esteem of Amelia, and of recommending himself somewhat to her by appearing in the light of her champion; for which purpose he added that compliment to Amelia in his letter. He concluded upon the whole that, if Booth himself opened the letter, he would certainly meet him the next morning; but if his wife should open it before he came home it might have the effects before mentioned; and, for his future expostulation with Booth, it would not be in Amelia's power to prevent it.

Now it happened that this pimp had more masters than one. Amongst these was the worthy Mr. Trent, for whom he had often done business of the pimping vocation. He had been employed indeed in the service of the great peer himself, under the direction of the said Trent, and was the very person who had assisted the said Trent in dogging Booth and his wife to the opera-house on the masquerade night.

This subaltern pimp was with his superior Trent yesterday morning, when he found a bailiff with him in order to receive his instructions for the arresting Booth, when the bailiff said it would be a very diffi-

Digitized by Google

cult matter to take him, for that to his knowledge he was as shy a cock as any in England. The subaltern immediately acquainted Trent with the business in which he was employed by the colonel; upon which Trent enjoined him the moment he had set him to give immediate notice to the bailiff, which he agreed to, and performed accordingly.

The bailiff, on receiving the notice, immediately set out for his stand at an alehouse within three doors of Miss Matthews's lodgings; at which, unfortunately for poor Booth, he arrived a very few minutes before Booth left that lady in order to return to Amelia.

These were several matters of which we thought necessary our reader should be informed; for, besides that it conduces greatly to a perfect understanding of all history, there is no exercise of the mind of a sensible reader more pleasant than the tracing the several small and almost imperceptible links in every chain of events by which all the great actions of the world are produced. We will now in the next chapter proceed with our history.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER TWO

IN WHICH AMELIA VISITS HER HUSBAND.

AMELIA, after much anxious thinking, in which she sometimes flattered herself that her husband was less guilty than she had at first imagined him, and that he had some good excuse to make for himself (for, indeed, she was not so able as willing to make one for him), at length resolved to set out for the bailiff's castle. Having therefore strictly recommended the care of her children to her good landlady, she sent for a hackney coach, and ordered the coachman to drive to Gray's-inn-lane.

When she came to the house, and asked for the captain, the bailiff's wife, who came to the door, guessing, by the greatness of her beauty and the disorder of her dress, that she was a young lady of pleasure, answered surlily, "Captain! I do not know of any captain that is here, not I!" For this good woman was, as well as dame Purgante in Prior, a bitter enemy to all whores, especially to those of the handsome kind; for some such she suspected to go shares with her in a certain property to which the law gave her the sole right.

Amelia replied she was certain that Captain Booth was there. "Well, if he is so," cries the bailiff's

Digitized by Google

wife, "you may come into the kitchen if you will, and he shall be called down to you if you have any business with him." At the same time she muttered something to herself, and concluded a little more intelligibly, though still in a muttering voice, that she kept no such house.

Amelia, whose innocence gave her no suspicion of the true cause of this good woman's sullenness, was frightened, and began to fear she knew not what. At last she made a shift to totter into the kitchen, when the mistress of the house asked her, "Well, madam, who shall I tell the captain wants to speak with him?"

"I ask your pardon, madam," cries Amelia; "in my confusion I really forgot you did not know me — tell him, if you please, that I am his wife."

"And you are indeed his wife, madam?" cries Mrs. Bailiff, a little softened.

"Yes, indeed, and upon my honour," answers Amelia.

"If this be the case," cries the other, "you may walk up-stairs if you please. Heaven forbid I should part man and wife! Indeed, I think they can never be too much together. But I never will suffer any bad doings in my house, nor any of the town ladies to come to gentlemen here."

Amelia answered that she liked her the better: for, indeed, in her present disposition, Amelia was as much exasperated against wicked women as the virtuous mistress of the house, or any other virtuous woman could be.

The bailiff's wife then ushered Amelia up-stairs,

Digitized by Google

and, having unlocked the prisoner's doors, cried, "Captain, here is your lady, sir, come to see you." At which words Booth started up from his chair, and caught Amelia in his arms, embracing her for a considerable time with so much rapture, that the bailiff's wife, who was an eye-witness of this violent fondness, began to suspect whether Amelia had really told her truth. However, she had some little awe of the captain; and for fear of being in the wrong did not interfere, but shut the door and turned the key.

When Booth found himself alone with his wife, and had vented the first violence of his rapture in kisses and embraces, he looked tenderly at her and cried, "Is it possible, Amelia, is it possible you can have this goodness to follow such a wretch as me to such a place as this — or do you come to upbraid me with my guilt, and to sink me down to that perdition I so justly deserve?"

"Am I so given to upbraiding then?" says she, in a gentle voice; "have I ever given you occasion to think I would sink you to perdition?"

"Far be it from me, my love, to think so," answered he. "And yet you may forgive the utmost fears of an offending, penitent sinner. I know, indeed, the extent of your goodness, and yet I know my guilt so great —"

"Alas! Mr. Booth," said she, "what guilt is this which you mention, and which you writ to me of last night? — Sure, by your mentioning to me so much, you intend to tell me more — nay, indeed, to tell me all; and not leave my mind open to suspicions perhaps ten times worse than the truth."

Digitized by Google

"Will you give me a patient hearing?" said he.

"I will indeed," answered she, "nay, I am prepared to hear the worst you can unfold; nay, perhaps, the worst is short of my apprehensions."

Booth then, after a little further apology, began and related to her the whole that had passed between him and Miss Matthews, from their first meeting in the prison to their separation the preceding evening. All which, as the reader knows it already, it would be tedious and unpardonable to transcribe from his mouth. He told her likewise all that he had done and suffered to conceal his transgression from her knowledge. This he assured her was the business of his visit last night, the consequence of which was, he declared in the most solemn manner, no other than an absolute quarrel with Miss Matthews, of whom he had taken a final leave.

When he had ended his narration, Amelia, after a short silence, answered, "Indeed, I firmly believe every word you have said, but I cannot now forgive you the fault you have confessed; and my reason is — because I have forgiven it long ago. Here, my dear," said she, "is an instance that I am likewise capable of keeping a secret." — She then delivered her husband a letter which she had some time ago received from Miss Matthews, and which was the same which that lady had mentioned, and supposed, as Booth had never heard of it, that it had miscarried; for she sent it by the penny post. In this letter, which was signed by a feigned name, she had acquainted Amelia with the infidelity of her husband, and had besides very greatly abused him; tax-

Digitized by Google

ing him with many falsehoods, and, among the rest, with having spoken very slightingly and disrespectfully of his wife.

Amelia never shined forth to Booth in so amiable and great a light; nor did his own unworthiness ever appear to him so mean and contemptible as at this instant. However, when he had read the letter, he uttered many violent protestations to her, that all which related to herself was absolutely false.

"I am convinced it is," said she. "I would not have a suspicion of the contrary for the world. I assure you I had, till last night revived it in my memory, almost forgot the letter; for, as I well knew from whom it came, by her mentioning obligations which she had conferred on you, and which you had more than once spoken to me of, I made large allowances for the situation you was then in; and I was the more satisfied, as the letter itself, as well as many other circumstances, convinced me the affair was at an end."

Booth now uttered the most extravagant expressions of admiration and fondness that his heart could dictate, and accompanied them with the warmest embraces. All which warmth and tenderness she returned; and tears of love and joy gushed from both their eyes. So ravished indeed were their hearts, that for some time they both forgot the dreadful situation of their affairs.

This, however, was but a short reverie. It soon recurred to Amelia, that, though she had the liberty of leaving that house when she pleased, she could not take her beloved husband with her. This thought

Digitized by Google

stung her tender bosom to the quick, and she could not so far command herself as to refrain from many sorrowful exclamations against the hardship of their destiny; but when she saw the effect they had upon Booth she stifled her rising grief, forced a little chearfulness into her countenance, and, exerting all the spirits she could raise within herself, expressed her hopes of seeing a speedy end to their sufferings. She then asked her husband what she should do for him, and to whom she should apply for his deliverance?

"You know, my dear," cries Booth, "that the doctor is to be in town some time to-day. My hopes of immediate redemption are only in him; and, if that can be obtained, I make no doubt but of the success of that affair which is in the hands of a gentleman who hath faithfully promised, and in whose power I am so well assured it is to serve me."

Thus did this poor man support his hopes by a dependence on that ticket which he had so dearly purchased of one who pretended to manage the wheels in the great state lottery of preferment. A lottery, indeed, which hath this to recommend it — that many poor wretches feed their imaginations with the prospect of a prize during their whole lives, and never discover they have drawn a blank.

Amelia, who was of a pretty sanguine temper, and was entirely ignorant of these matters, was full as easy to be deceived into hopes as her husband; but in reality at present she turned her eyes to no distant prospect, the desire of regaining her husband's liberty having engrossed her whole mind.

Digitized by Google

While they were discoursing on these matters they heard a violent noise in the house, and immediately after several persons passed by their door up-stairs to the apartment over their head. This greatly terrified the gentle spirit of Amelia, and she cried —"Good Heavens, my dear, must I leave you in this horrid place? I am terrified with a thousand fears concerning you."

Booth endeavoured to comfort her, saying that he was in no manner of danger, and that he doubted not but that the doctor would soon be with him — "And stay, my dear," cries he; "now I recollect, suppose you should apply to my old friend James; for I believe you are pretty well satisfied that your apprehensions of him were groundless. I have no reason to think but that he would be as ready to serve me as formerly."

Amelia turned pale as ashes at the name of James, and, instead of making a direct answer to her husband, she laid hold of him, and cried, "My dear, I have one favour to beg of you, and I insist on your granting it me."

Booth readily swore he would deny her nothing.

"It is only this, my dear," said she, "that, if that detested colonel comes, you will not see him. Let the people of the house tell him you are not here."

"He knows nothing of my being here," answered Booth; "but why should I refuse to see him if he should be kind enough to come hither to me? Indeed, my Amelia, you have taken a dislike to that man without sufficient reason."

"I speak not upon that account," cries Amelia;

Digitized by Google

"but I have had dreams last night about you two. Perhaps you will laugh at my folly, but pray indulge it. Nay, I insist on your promise of not denying me."

"Dreams! my dear creature," answered he. "What dream can you have had of us?"

"One too horrible to be mentioned," replied she. — "I cannot think of it without horrour; and, unless you will promise me not to see the colonel till I return, I positively will never leave you."

"Indeed, my Amelia," said Booth, "I never knew you unreasonable before. How can a woman of your sense talk of dreams?"

"Suffer me to be once at least unreasonable," said Amelia, "as you are so good-natured to say I am not often so. Consider what I have lately suffered, and how weak my spirits must be at this time."

As Booth was going to speak, the bailiff, without any ceremony, entered the room, and cried, "No offence, I hope, madam; my wife, it seems, did not know you. She thought the captain had a mind for a bit of flesh by the bye. But I have quieted all matters; for I know you very well: I have seen that handsome face many a time when I have been waiting upon the captain formerly. No offence, I hope, madam; but if my wife was as handsome as you are I should not look for worse goods abroad."

Booth conceived some displeasure at this speech, but he did not think proper to express more than a pish; and then asked the bailiff what was the meaning of the noise they heard just now?

"I know of no noise," answered the bailiff.

Digitized by Google

"Some of my men have been carrying a piece of bad luggage up-stairs; a poor rascal that resisted the law and justice; so I gave him a cut or two with a hanger. If they should prove mortal, he must thank himself for it. If a man will not behave like a gentleman to an officer, he must take the consequence; but I must say that for you, captain, you behave yourself like a gentleman, and therefore I shall always use you as such; and I hope you will find bail soon with all my heart. This is but a paultry sum to what the last was; and I do assure you there is nothing else against you in the office."

The latter part of the bailiff's speech somewhat comforted Amelia, who had been a little frightened by the former; and she soon after took leave of her husband to go in quest of the doctor, who, as Amelia had heard that morning, was expected in town that very day, which was somewhat sooner than he had intended at his departure.

Before she went, however, she left a strict charge with the bailiff, who ushered her very civilly down-stairs, that if one Colonel James came there to enquire for her husband he should deny that he was there.

She then departed; and the bailiff immediately gave a very strict charge to his wife, his maid, and his followers, that if one Colonel James, or any one from him, should enquire after the captain, that they should let him know he had the captain above-stairs; for he doubted not but that the colonel was one of Booth's creditors, and he hoped for a second bail-bond by his means.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER THREE

CONTAINING MATTER PERTINENT TO THE HISTORY.

AMELIA, in her way to the doctor's, determined just to stop at her own lodgings, which lay a little out of the road, and to pay a momentary visit to her children.

This was fortunate enough; for, had she called at the doctor's house, she would have heard nothing of him, which would have caused in her some alarm and disappointment; for the doctor was set down at Mrs. Atkinson's, where he was directed to Amelia's lodgings, to which he went before he called at his own; and here Amelia now found him playing with her two children.

The doctor had been a little surprized at not finding Amelia at home, or any one that could give an account of her. He was now more surprized to see her come in such a dress, and at the disorder which he very plainly perceived in her pale and melancholy countenance. He addressed her first (for indeed she was in no great haste to speak), and cried, "My dear child, what is the matter? where is your husband? some mischief I am afraid hath happened to him in my absence."

"O my dear doctor!" answered Amelia, "sure some good angel hath sent you hither. My poor

Digitized by Google

Will is arrested again. I left him in the most miserable condition in the very house whence your goodness formerly redeemed him."

"Arrested!" cries the doctor. "Then it must be for some very inconsiderable trifle."

"I wish it was," said Amelia; "but it is for no less than fifty pound."

"Then," cries the doctor, "he hath been disingenuous with me. He told me he did not owe ten pounds in the world for which he was liable to be sued."

"I know not what to say," cries Amelia. "Indeed, I am afraid to tell you the truth."

"How, child?" said the doctor — "I hope you will never disguise it to any one, especially to me. Any prevarication, I promise you, will forfeit my friendship for ever."

"I will tell you the whole," cries Amelia, "and rely entirely on your goodness." She then related the gaming story, not forgetting to set in the fullest light, and to lay the strongest emphasis on, his promise never to play again.

The doctor fetched a deep sigh when he had heard Amelia's relation, and cried, "I am sorry, child, for the share you are to partake in your husband's sufferings; but as for him, I really think he deserves no compassion. You say he hath promised never to play again, but I must tell you he hath broke his promise to me already; for I had heard he was formerly addicted to this vice, and had given him sufficient caution against it. You will consider, child, I am already pretty largely engaged for

Digitized by Google

him, every farthing of which I am sensible I must pay. You know I would go to the utmost verge of prudence to serve you; but I must not exceed my ability, which is not very great; and I have several families on my hands who are by misfortune alone brought to want. I do assure you I cannot at present answer for such a sum as this without distressing my own circumstances."

"Then Heaven have mercy upon us all!" cries Amelia, "for we have no other friend on earth: my husband is undone, and these poor little wretches must be starved."

The doctor cast his eyes on the children, and then cried, "I hope not so. I told you I must distress my circumstances, and I will distress them this once on your account, and on the account of these poor little babes. But things must not go on any longer in this way. You must take an heroic resolution. I will hire a coach for you to-morrow morning which shall carry you all down to my parsonage-house. There you shall have my protection till something can be done for your husband; of which, to be plain with you, I at present see no likelihood."

Amelia fell upon her knees in an ecstasy of thanksgiving to the doctor, who immediately raised her up, and placed her in her chair. She then recollected herself, and said, "O my worthy friend, I have still another matter to mention to you, in which I must have both your advice and assistance. My soul blushes to give you all this trouble; but what other friend have I? — indeed, what other friend could I apply to so properly on such an occasion?"

Digitized by Google

The doctor, with a very kind voice and countenance, desired her to speak. She then said, "O sir! that wicked colonel whom I have mentioned to you formerly hath picked some quarrel with my husband (for she did not think proper to mention the cause), and hath sent him a challenge. It came to my hand last night after he was arrested: I opened and read it."

"Give it me, child," said the doctor.

She answered she had burnt it, as was indeed true. "But I remember it was an appointment to meet with sword and pistol this morning at Hyde-park."

"Make yourself easy, my dear child," cries the doctor; "I will take care to prevent any mischief."

"But consider, my dear sir," said she, "this is a tender matter. My husband's honour is to be preserved as well as his life."

"And so is his soul, which ought to be the dearest of all things," cries the doctor. "Honour! nonsense! Can honour dictate to him to disobey the express commands of his Maker, in compliance with a custom established by a set of blockheads, founded on false principles of virtue, in direct opposition to the plain and positive precepts of religion, and tending manifestly to give a sanction to ruffians, and to protect them in all the ways of impudence and villany?"

"All this, I believe, is very true," cries Amelia; "but yet you know, doctor, the opinion of the world."

"You talk simply, child," cries the doctor. "What is the opinion of the world opposed to religion and

Digitized by Google

virtue? but you are in the wrong. It is not the opinion of the world; it is the opinion of the idle, ignorant, and profligate. It is impossible it should be the opinion of one man of sense, who is in earnest in his belief of our religion. Chiefly, indeed, it hath been upheld by the nonsense of women, who, either from their extreme cowardice and desire of protection, or, as Mr. Bayle thinks, from their excessive vanity, have been always forward to countenance a set of hectors and bravoes, and to despise all men of modesty and sobriety; though these are often, at the bottom, not only the better but the braver men."

"You know, doctor," cries Amelia, "I have never presumed to argue with you; your opinion is to me always instruction, and your word a law."

"Indeed, child," cries the doctor, "I know you are a good woman; and yet I must observe to you, that this very desire of feeding the passion of female vanity with the heroism of her man, old Homer seems to make the characteristic of a bad and loose woman. He introduces Helen upbraiding her gallant with having quitted the fight, and left the victory to Menelaus, and seeming to be sorry that she had left her husband only because he was the better duellist of the two: but in how different a light doth he represent the tender and chaste love of Andromache to her worthy Hector! she dissuades him from exposing himself to danger, even in a just cause. This is indeed a weakness, but it is an amiable one, and becoming the true feminine character; but a woman who, out of heroic vanity (for so it is), would hazard not only the life but the soul too of her husband in

Digitized by Google

a duel, is a monster, and ought to be painted in no other character but that of a Fury."

"I assure you, doctor," cries Amelia, "I never saw this matter in the odious light in which you have truly represented it, before. I am ashamed to reccollect what I have formerly said on this subject. And yet, whilst the opinion of the world is as it is, one would wish to comply as far as possible, especially as my husband is an officer of the army. If it can be done, therefore, with safety to his honour — "

"Again honour!" cries the doctor; "indeed I will not suffer that noble word to be so basely and barbarously prostituted. I have known some of these men of honour, as they call themselves, to be the most arrant rascals in the universe."

"Well, I ask your pardon," said she; "reputation then, if you please, or any other word you like better; you know my meaning very well."

"I do know your meaning," cries the doctor, "and Virgil knew it a great while ago. The next time you see your friend Mrs. Atkinson, ask her what it was made Dido fall in love with Æneas?"

"Nay, dear sir," said Amelia, "do not rally me so unmercifully; think where my poor husband is now."

"He is," answered the doctor, "where I will presently be with him. In the mean time, do you pack up everything in order for your journey to-morrow; for if you are wise, you will not trust your husband a day longer in this town — therefore to packing."

Amelia promised she would, though indeed she wanted not any warning for her journey on this account; for when she packed up herself in the

Digitized by Google

coach, she packed up her all. However, she did not think proper to mention this to the doctor; for, as he was now in pretty good humour, she did not care to venture again discomposing his temper.

The doctor then set out for Gray's-inn-lane, and, as soon as he was gone, Amelia began to consider of her incapacity to take a journey in her present situation without even a clean shift. At last she resolved, as she was possessed of seven guineas and a half, to go to her friend and redeem some of her own and her husband's linen out of captivity; indeed just so much as would render it barely possible for them to go out of town with any kind of decency. And this resolution she immediately executed.

As soon as she had finished her business with the pawnbroker (if a man who lends under thirty *per cent.* deserves that name), he said to her, "Pray, madam, did you know that man who was here yesterday when you brought the picture?" Amelia answered in the negative. "Indeed, madam," said the broker, "he knows you, though he did not recollect you while you was here, as your hood was drawn over your face; but the moment you was gone he begged to look at the picture, which I, thinking no harm, permitted. He had scarce looked upon it when he cried out, 'By heaven and earth it is her picture!' He then asked me if I knew you. 'Indeed,' says I, 'I never saw the lady before.'"

In this last particular, however, the pawnbroker a little savoured of his profession, and made a small deviation from the truth, for, when the man had asked him if he knew the lady, he answered she was

Digitized by Google

some poor undone woman who had pawned all her cloathes to him the day before; and I suppose, says he, this picture is the last of her goods and chattels. This hint we thought proper to give the reader, as it may chance to be material.

Amelia answered coldly that she had taken so very little notice of the man that she scarce remembered he was there.

"I assure you, madam," says the pawnbroker, "he hath taken very great notice of you; for the man changed countenance upon what I said, and presently after begged me to give him a dram. Oho! thinks I to myself, are you thereabouts? I would not be so much in love with some folks as some people are for more interest than I shall ever make of a thousand pound."

Amelia blushed, and said, with some peevishness, "That she knew nothing of the man, but supposed he was some impertinent fellow or other."

"Nay, madam," answered the pawnbroker, "I assure you he is not worthy your regard. He is a poor wretch, and I believe I am possessed of most of his moveables. However, I hope you are not offended, for indeed he said no harm; but he was very strangely disordered, that is the truth of it."

Amelia was very desirous of putting an end to this conversation, and altogether as eager to return to her children; she therefore bundled up her things as fast as she could, and, calling for a hackney-coach, directed the coachman to her lodgings, and bid him drive her home with all the haste he could.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FOUR

IN WHICH DOCTOR HARRISON VISITS COLONEL JAMES.

THE doctor, when he left Amelia, intended to go directly to Booth, but he presently changed his mind, and determined first to call on the colonel, as he thought it was proper to put an end to that matter before he gave Booth his liberty.

The doctor found the two colonels, James and Bath, together. They both received him very civilly, for James was a very well-bred man, and Bath always shewed a particular respect to the clergy, he being indeed a perfect good Christian, except in the articles of fighting and swearing.

Our divine sat some time without mentioning the subject of his errand, in hopes that Bath would go away, but when he found no likelihood of that (for indeed Bath was of the two much the most pleased with his company), he told James that he had something to say to him relating to Mr. Booth, which he believed he might speak before his brother.

"Undoubtedly, sir," said James; "for there can be no secrets between us which my brother may not hear."

"I come then to you, sir," said the doctor, "from the most unhappy woman in the world, to whose

Digitized by Google

afflictions you have very greatly and very cruelly added by sending a challenge to her husband, which hath very luckily fallen into her hands; for, had the man for whom you designed it received it, I am afraid you would not have seen me upon this occasion."

"If I writ such a letter to Mr. Booth, sir," said James, "you may be assured I did not expect this visit in answer to it."

"I do not think you did," cries the doctor; "but you have great reason to thank Heaven for ordering this matter contrary to your expectations. I know not what trifle may have drawn this challenge from you, but, after what I have some reason to know of you, sir, I must plainly tell you that, if you had added to your guilt already committed against this man, that of having his blood upon your hands, your soul would have become as black as hell itself."

"Give me leave to say," cries the colonel, "this is a language which I am not used to hear; and if your cloth was not your protection you should not give it me with impunity. After what you know of me, sir! What do you presume to know of me to my disadvantage?"

"You say my cloth is my protection, colonel," answered the doctor; "therefore pray lay aside your anger: I do not come with any design of affronting or offending you."

"Very well," cries Bath; "that declaration is sufficient from a clergyman, let him say what he pleases."

"Indeed, sir," says the doctor very mildly, "I con-

Digitized by Google

sult equally the good of you both, and, in a spiritual sense, more especially yours; for you know you have injured this poor man."

"So far on the contrary," cries James, "that I have been his greatest benefactor. I scorn to upbraid him, but you force me to it. Nor have I ever done him the least injury."

"Perhaps not," said the doctor; "I will alter what I have said. But for this I apply to your honour — Have you not intended him an injury, the very intention of which cancels every obligation?"

"How, sir?" answered the colonel; "what do you mean?"

"My meaning," replied the doctor, "is almost too tender to mention. Come, colonel, examine your own heart, and then answer me, on your honour, if you have not intended to do him the highest wrong which one man can do another?"

"I do not know what you mean by the question," answered the colonel.

"D—n me, the question is very transparent!" cries Bath. "From any other man it would be an affront with the strongest emphasis, but from one of the doctor's cloth it demands a categorical answer."

"I am not a papist, sir," answered Colonel James, "nor am I obliged to confess to my priest. But if you have anything to say speak openly, for I do not understand your meaning."

"I have explained my meaning to you already," said the doctor, "in a letter I wrote to you on the subject — a subject which I am sorry I should have any occasion to write upon to a Christian."

Digitized by Google

"I do remember now," cries the colonel, "that I received a very impertinent letter, something like a sermon, against adultery; but I did not expect to hear the author own it to my face."

"That brave man then, sir," answered the doctor, "stands before you who dares own he wrote that letter, and dares affirm too that it was writ on a just and strong foundation. But if the hardness of your heart could prevail on you to treat my good intention with contempt and scorn, what, pray, could induce you to shew it, nay, to give it Mr. Booth? What motive could you have for that, unless you meant to insult him, and provoke your rival to give you that opportunity of putting him out of the world, which you have since wickedly sought by your challenge?"

"I give him the letter!" said the colonel.

"Yes, sir," answered the doctor, "he shewed me the letter, and affirmed that you gave it him at the masquerade."

"He is a lying rascal, then!" said the colonel very passionately. "I scarce took the trouble of reading the letter, and lost it out of my pocket."

Here Bath interfered, and explained this affair in the manner in which it happened, and with which the reader is already acquainted. He concluded by great eulogiums on the performance, and declared it was one of the most enthusiastic (meaning, perhaps, ecclesiastic) letters that ever was written. "And d—n me," says he, "if I do not respect the author with the utmost emphasis of thinking."

The doctor now recollected what had passed with Booth, and perceived he had made a mistake of one

Digitized by Google

colonel for another. This he presently acknowledged to Colonel James, and said that the mistake had been his, and not Booth's.

Bath now collected all his gravity and dignity, as he called it, into his countenance, and, addressing himself to James, said, "And was that letter writ to you, brother? — I hope you never deserved any suspicion of this kind."

"Brother," cries James, "I am accountable to myself for my actions, and shall not render an account either to you or to that gentleman."

"As to me, brother," answered Bath, "you say right; but I think this gentleman may call you to an account; nay, I think it is his duty so to do. And let me tell you, brother, there is one much greater than he to whom you must give an account. Mrs. Booth is really a fine woman, a lady of most imperious and majestic presence. I have heard you often say that you liked her; and, if you have quarrelled with her husband upon this account, by all the dignity of man I think you ought to ask his pardon."

"Indeed, brother," cries James, "I can bear this no longer — you will make me angry presently."

"Angry! brother James," cries Bath; "angry! — I love you, brother, and have obligations to you. I will say no more, but I hope you know I do not fear making any man angry."

James answered he knew it well; and then the doctor, apprehending that while he was stopping up one breach he should make another, presently interfered, and turned the discourse back to Booth.

Digitized by Google

"You tell me, sir," said he to James, "that my gown is my protection; let it then at least protect me where I have had no design in offending — where I have consulted your highest welfare, as in truth I did in writing this letter. And if you did not in the least deserve any such suspicion, still you have no cause for resentment. Caution against sin, even to the innocent, can never be unwholesome. But this I assure you, whatever anger you have to me, you can have none to poor Booth, who was entirely ignorant of my writing to you, and who, I am certain, never entertained the least suspicion of you; on the contrary, reveres you with the highest esteem, and love, and gratitude. Let me therefore reconcile all matters between you, and bring you together before he hath even heard of this challenge."

"Brother," cries Bath, "I hope I shall not make you angry — I lie when I say so; for I am indifferent to any man's anger. Let me be an accessory to what the doctor hath said. I think I may be trusted with matters of this nature, and it is a little unkind that, if you intended to send a challenge, you did not make me the bearer. But, indeed, as to what appears to me, this matter may be very well made up; and, as Mr. Booth doth not know of the challenge, I don't see why he ever should, any more than your giving him the lie just now; but that he shall never have from me, nor, I believe, from this gentleman; for, indeed, if he should, it would be incumbent upon him to cut your throat."

"Lookee, doctor," said James, "I do not deserve the unkind suspicion you just now threw out against

Digitized by Google

me. I never thirsted after any man's blood; and, as for what hath passed, since this discovery hath happened, I may, perhaps, not think it worth my while to trouble myself any more about it."

The doctor was not contented with perhaps, he insisted on a firm promise, to be bound with the colonel's honour. This at length he obtained, and then departed well satisfied.

In fact, the colonel was ashamed to avow the real cause of the quarrel to this good man, or, indeed, to his brother Bath, who would not only have condemned him equally with the doctor, but would possibly have quarrelled with him on his sister's account, whom, as the reader must have observed, he loved above all things; and, in plain truth, though the colonel was a brave man, and dared to fight, yet he was altogether as willing to let it alone; and this made him now and then give a little way to the wrongheadedness of Colonel Bath, who, with all the other principles of honour and humanity, made no more of cutting the throat of a man upon any of his punctilios than a butcher doth of killing sheep.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT PASSED AT THE BAILIFF'S HOUSE.

THE doctor now set forwards to his friend Booth, and, as he past by the door of his attorney in the way, he called upon him and took him with him.

The meeting between him and Booth need not be expatiated on. The doctor was really angry, and, though he deferred his lecture to a more proper opportunity, yet, as he was no dissembler (indeed, he was incapable of any disguise), he could not put on a show of that heartiness with which he had formerly used to receive his friend.

Booth at last began himself in the following manner: "Doctor, I am really ashamed to see you; and, if you knew the confusion of my soul on this occasion, I am sure you would pity rather than upbraid me; and yet I can say with great sincerity I rejoice in this last instance of my shame, since I am like to reap the most solid advantage from it." The doctor stared at this, and Booth thus proceeded: "Since I have been in this wretched place I have employed my time almost entirely in reading over a series of sermons which are contained in that book (meaning Dr. Barrow's works, which then lay on the table before him) in proof of the Christian

Digitized by Google

religion; and so good an effect have they had upon me, that I shall, I believe, be the better man for them as long as I live. I have not a doubt (for I own I have had such) which remains now unsatisfied. If ever an angel might be thought to guide the pen of a writer, surely the pen of that great and good man had such an assistant." The doctor readily concurred in the praises of Dr. Barrow, and added, "You say you have had your doubts, young gentleman; indeed, I did not know that — and, pray, what were your doubts?" "Whatever they were, sir," said Booth, "they are now satisfied, as I believe those of every impartial and sensible reader will be if he will, with due attention, read over these excellent sermons." "Very well," answered the doctor, "though I have conversed, I find, with a false brother hitherto, I am glad you are reconciled to truth at last, and I hope your future faith will have some influence on your future life." "I need not tell you, sir," replied Booth, "that will always be the case where faith is sincere, as I assure you mine is. Indeed, I never was a rash disbeliever; my chief doubt was founded on this — that, as men appeared to me to act entirely from their passions, their actions could have neither merit nor demerit." "A very worthy conclusion truly!" cries the doctor; "but if men act, as I believe they do, from their passions, it would be fair to conclude that religion to be true which applies immediately to the strongest of these passions, hope and fear; chusing rather to rely on its rewards and punishments than on that native beauty of virtue which

Digitized by Google

some of the antient philosophers thought proper to recommend to their disciples. But we will defer this discourse till another opportunity; at present, as the devil hath thought proper to set you free, I will try if I can prevail on the bailiff to do the same."

The doctor had really not so much money in town as Booth's debt amounted to, and therefore, though he would otherwise very willingly have paid it, he was forced to give bail to the action. For which purpose, as the bailiff was a man of great form, he was obliged to get another person to be bound with him. This person, however, the attorney undertook to procure, and immediately set out in quest of him.

During his absence the bailiff came into the room, and, addressing himself to the doctor, said, "I think, sir, your name is Doctor Harrison?" The doctor immediately acknowledged his name. Indeed, the bailiff had seen it to a bail-bond before. "Why, then, sir," said the bailiff, "there is a man above in a dying condition that desires the favour of speaking to you; I believe he wants you to pray by him."

The bailiff himself was not more ready to execute his office on all occasions for his fee than the doctor was to execute his for nothing. Without making any further enquiry therefore into the condition of the man, he immediately went up-stairs.

As soon as the bailiff returned down-stairs, which was immediately after he had lodged the doctor in the room, Booth had the curiosity to ask him who this man was. "Why, I don't know much of him," said the bailiff; "I had him once in custody before

Digitized by Google

now: I remember it was when your honour was here last; and now I remember, too, he said that he knew your honour very well. Indeed, I had some opinion of him at that time, for he spent his money very much like a gentleman; but I have discovered since that he is a poor fellow, and worth nothing. He is a mere shy cock; I have had the stuff about me this week, and could never get at him till this morning; nay, I don't believe we should ever have found out his lodgings had it not been for the attorney that was here just now, who gave us information. And so we took him this morning by a comical way enough; for we dressed up one of my men in women's cloathes, who told the people of the house that he was his sister, just come to town — for we were told by the attorney that he had such a sister, upon which he was let up-stairs — and so kept the door ajar till I and another rushed in. Let me tell you, captain, there are as good stratagems made use of in our business as any in the army."

"But pray, sir," said Booth, "did not you tell me this morning that the poor fellow was desperately wounded; nay, I think you told the doctor that he was a dying man?"

"I had like to have forgot that," cries the bailiff. "Nothing would serve the gentleman but that he must make resistance, and he gave my man a blow with a stick; but I soon quieted him by giving him a wipe or two with a hanger. Not that, I believe, I have done his business neither; but the fellow is faint-hearted, and the surgeon, I fancy, frightens him more than he need. But, however, let the

Digitized by Google

worst come to the worst, the law is all on my side, and it is only *se fendendo*. The attorney that was here just now told me so, and bid me fear nothing; for that he would stand my friend, and undertake the cause; and he is a devilish good one at a defence at the Old Bailey, I promise you. I have known him bring off several that everybody thought would have been hanged."

"But suppose you should be acquitted," said Booth, "would not the blood of this poor wretch lie a little heavy at your heart?"

"Why should it, captain?" said the bailiff. "Is not all done in a lawful way? Why will people resist the law when they know the consequence? To be sure, if a man was to kill another in an unlawful manner as it were, and what the law calls murder, that is quite and clear another thing. I should not care to be convicted of murder any more than another man. Why now, captain, you have been abroad in the wars they tell me, and to be sure must have killed men in your time. Pray, was you ever afraid afterwards of seeing their ghosts?"

"That is a different affair," cries Booth; "but I would not kill a man in cold blood for all the world."

"There is no difference at all, as I can see," cries the bailiff. "One is as much in the way of business as the other. When gentlemen behave themselves like unto gentlemen I know how to treat them as such as well as any officer the king hath; and when they do not, why they must take what follows, and the law doth not call it murder."

Digitized by Google

Booth very plainly saw that the bailiff had squared his conscience exactly according to law, and that he could not easily subvert his way of thinking. He therefore gave up the cause, and desired the bailiff to expedite the bonds, which he promised to do; saying, he hoped he had used him with proper civility this time, if he had not the last, and that he should be remembered for it.

But before we close this chapter we shall endeavour to satisfy an enquiry, which may arise in our most favourite readers (for so are the most curious), how it came to pass that such a person as was Doctor Harrison should employ such a fellow as this Murphy?

The case then was thus: this Murphy had been clerk to an attorney in the very same town in which the doctor lived, and, when he was out of his time, had set up with a character fair enough, and had married a maid-servant of Mrs. Harris, by which means he had all the business to which that lady and her friends, in which number was the doctor, could recommend him.

Murphy went on with his business, and thrived very well, till he happened to make an unfortunate slip, in which he was detected by a brother of the same calling. But, though we call this by the gentle name of a slip, in respect to its being so extremely common, it was a matter in which the law, if it had ever come to its ears, would have passed a very severe censure, being, indeed, no less than perjury and subornation of perjury.

This brother attorney, being a very good-natured

Digitized by Google

man, and unwilling to bespatter his own profession, and considering, perhaps, that the consequence did in no wise affect the public, who had no manner of interest in the alternative whether A., in whom the right was, or B., to whom Mr. Murphy, by the means aforesaid, had transferred it, succeeded in an action; we mention this particular, because, as this brother attorney was a very violent party man, and a professed stickler for the public, to suffer any injury to have been done to that, would have been highly inconsistent with his principles.

This gentleman, therefore, came to Mr. Murphy, and, after shewing him that he had it in his power to convict him of the aforesaid crime, very generously told him that he had not the least delight in bringing any man to destruction, nor the least animosity against him. All that he insisted upon was, that he would not live in the same town or county with one who had been guilty of such an action. He then told Mr. Murphy that he would keep the secret on two conditions; the one was, that he immediately quitted that country; the other was, that he should convince him he deserved this kindness by his gratitude, and that Murphy should transfer to the other all the business which he then had in those parts, and to which he could possibly recommend him.

It is the observation of a very wise man, that it is a very common exercise of wisdom in this world, of two evils to chuse the least. The reader, therefore, cannot doubt but that Mr. Murphy complied with the alternative proposed by his kind brother,

Digitized by Google

and accepted the terms on which secrecy was to be obtained.

This happened while the doctor was abroad, and with all this, except the departure of Murphy, not only the doctor, but the whole town (save his aforesaid brother alone), were to this day unacquainted.

The doctor, at his return, hearing that Mr. Murphy was gone, applied to the other attorney in his affairs, who still employed this Murphy as his agent in town, partly, perhaps, out of good will to him, and partly from the recommendation of Miss Harris; for, as he had married a servant of the family, and a particular favourite of hers, there can be no wonder that she, who was entirely ignorant of the affair above related, as well as of his conduct in town, should continue her favour to him. It will appear, therefore, I apprehend, no longer strange that the doctor, who had seen this man but three times since his removal to town, and then conversed with him only on business, should remain as ignorant of his life and character, as a man generally is of the character of the hackney-coachman who drives him. Nor doth it reflect more on the honour or understanding of the doctor, under these circumstances, to employ Murphy, than it would if he had been driven about the town by a thief or a murderer.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SIX

WHAT PASSED BETWEEN THE DOCTOR AND THE SICK MAN.

WE left the doctor in the last chapter with the wounded man, to whom the doctor, in a very gentle voice, spoke as follows: —

"I am sorry, friend, to see you in this situation, and am very ready to give you any comfort or assistance within my power."

"I thank you kindly, doctor," said the man. "Indeed I should not have presumed to have sent to you had I not known your character; for, though I believe I am not at all known to you, I have lived many years in that town where you yourself had a house; my name is Robinson. I used to write for the attorneys in those parts, and I have been employed on your business in my time."

"I do not recollect you nor your name," said the doctor; "but consider, friend, your moments are precious, and your business, as I am informed, is to offer up your prayers to that great Being before whom you are shortly to appear. But first let me exhort you earnestly to a most serious repentance of all your sins."

"O doctor!" said the man; "pray; what is your opinion of a death-bed repentance?"

Digitized by Google

"If repentance is sincere," cries the doctor, "I hope, through the mercies and merits of our most powerful and benign Intercessor, it will never come too late."

"But do not you think, sir," cries the man, "that, in order to obtain forgiveness of any great sin we have committed, by an injury done to our neighbours, it is necessary, as far as in us lies, to make all the amends we can to the party injured, and to undo, if possible, the injury we have done?"

"Most undoubtedly," cries the doctor; "our pretence to repentance would otherwise be gross hypocrisy, and an impudent attempt to deceive and impose upon our Creator himself."

"Indeed, I am of the same opinion," cries the penitent; "and I think further, that this is thrown in my way, and hinted to me by that great Being; for an accident happened to me yesterday, by which, as things have fallen out since, I think I plainly discern the hand of Providence. I went yesterday, sir, you must know, to a pawnbroker's, to pawn the last moveable, which, except the poor cloathes you see on my back, I am worth in the world. While I was there a young lady came in to pawn her picture. She had disguised herself so much, and pulled her hood so over her face, that I did not know her while she stayed, which was scarce three minutes. As soon as she was gone the pawnbroker, taking the picture in his hand, cried out, *Upon my word, this is the handsomest face I ever saw in my life!* I desired him to let me look on the picture, which he readily did — and I no sooner cast my eyes upon it, than

Digitized by Google

the strong resemblance struck me, and I knew it to be Mrs. Booth."

"Mrs. Booth! what Mrs. Booth?" cries the doctor.

"Captain Booth's lady, the captain who is now below," said the other.

"How?" cries the doctor with great impetuosity.

"Have patience," said the man, "and you shall hear all. I expressed some surprize to the pawnbroker, and asked the lady's name. He answered, that he knew not her name; but that she was some undone wretch, who had the day before left all her cloathes with him in pawn. My guilt immediately flew in my face, and told me I had been accessary to this lady's undoing. The sudden shock so affected me, that, had it not been for a dram which the pawnbroker gave me, I believe I should have sunk on the spot."

"Accessary to her undoing! how accessary?" said the doctor. "Pray tell me, for I am impatient to hear."

"I will tell you all as fast as I can," cries the sick man. "You know, good doctor, that Mrs. Harris of our town had two daughters, this Mrs. Booth and another. Now, sir, it seems the other daughter had, some way or other, disobliged her mother a little before the old lady died; therefore she made a will, and left all her fortune, except one thousand pound, to Mrs. Booth; to which will Mr. Murphy, myself, and another who is now dead, were the witnesses. Mrs. Harris afterwards died suddenly; upon which it was contrived by her other daughter and Mr.

Digitized by Google

Murphy to make a new will, in which Mrs. Booth had a legacy of ten pound, and all the rest was given to the other. To this will, Murphy, myself, and the same third person, again set our hands."

"Good Heaven! how wonderful is thy providence!" cries the doctor — "Murphy, say you?"

"He himself, sir," answered Robinson; "Murphy, who is the greatest rogue, I believe, now in the world."

"Pray, sir, proceed," cries the doctor.

"For this service, sir," said Robinson, "myself and the third person, one Carter, received two hundred pound each. What reward Murphy himself had I know not. Carter died soon afterwards; and from that time, at several payments, I have by threats extorted above a hundred pound more. And this, sir, is the whole truth, which I am ready to testify if it would please Heaven to prolong my life."

"I hope it will," cries the doctor; "but something must be done for fear of accidents. I will send to counsel immediately to know how to secure your testimony. — Whom can I get to send? — Stay, ay — he will do — but I know not where his house or his chambers are. I will go myself — but I may be wanted here."

While the doctor was in this violent agitation the surgeon made his appearance. The doctor stood still in a meditating posture, while the surgeon examined his patient. After which the doctor begged him to declare his opinion, and whether he thought the wounded man in any immediate danger of death. "I do not know," answered the surgeon, "what you call

Digitized by Google

immediate. He may live several days — nay, he may recover. It is impossible to give any certain opinion in these cases." He then launched forth into a set of terms which the doctor, with all his scholarship, could not understand. To say the truth, many of them were not to be found in any dictionary or lexicon.

One discovery, however, the doctor made, and that was, that the surgeon was a very ignorant, conceited fellow, and knew nothing of his profession. He resolved, therefore, to get better advice for the sick; but this he postponed at present, and, applying himself to the surgeon, said, "He should be very much obliged to him if he knew where to find such a counsellor, and would fetch him thither. I should not ask such a favour of you, sir," says the doctor, "if it was not on business of the last importance, or if I could find any other messenger."

"I fetch, sir!" said the surgeon very angrily. "Do you take me for a footman or a porter? I don't know who you are; but I believe you are full as proper to go on such an errand as I am." (For as the doctor, who was just come off his journey, was very roughly dressed, the surgeon held him in no great respect.) The surgeon then called aloud from the top of the stairs, "Let my coachman draw up," and strutted off without any ceremony, telling his patient he would call again the next day.

At this very instant arrived Murphy with the other bail, and, finding Booth alone, he asked the bailiff at the door what was become of the doctor? "Why, the doctor," answered he, "is above-stairs, praying with ————." "How!" cries Murphy. "How

Digitized by Google

came you not to carry him directly to Newgate, as you promised me?" "Why, because he was wounded," cries the bailiff. "I thought it was charity to take care of him; and, besides, why should one make more noise about the matter than is necessary?" "And Doctor Harrison with him?" said Murphy. "Yes, he is," said the bailiff; "he desired to speak with the doctor very much, and they have been praying together almost this hour." "All is up and undone!" cries Murphy. "Let me come by, I have thought of some thing which I must do immediately."

Now, as by means of the surgeon's leaving the door open the doctor heard Murphy's voice naming Robinson peevishly, he drew softly to the top of the stairs, where he heard the foregoing dialogue; and as soon as Murphy had uttered his last words, and was moving downwards, the doctor immediately sallied from his post, running as fast as he could, and crying, Stop the villain! stop the thief!

The attorney wanted no better hint to accelerate his pace; and, having the start of the doctor, got downstairs, and out into the street; but the doctor was so close at his heels, and being in foot the nimbler of the two, he soon overtook him, and laid hold of him, as he would have done on either Broughton or Slack in the same cause.

This action in the street, accompanied with the frequent cry of Stop thief by the doctor during the chase, presently drew together a large mob, who began, as is usual, to enter immediately upon business, and to make strict enquiry into the matter, in

Digitized by Google

order to proceed to do justice in their summary way.

Murphy, who knew well the temper of the mob, cried out, "If you are a bailiff, shew me your writ. Gentlemen, he pretends to arrest me here without a writ."

Upon this, one of the sturdiest and forwardest of the mob, and who by a superior strength of body and of lungs presided in this assembly, declared he would suffer no such thing. "D—n me," says he, "away to the pump with the catchpole directly — shew me your writ, or let the gentleman go — you shall not arrest a man contrary to law."

He then laid his hands on the doctor, who, still fast griping the attorney, cried out, "He is a villain — I am no bailiff, but a clergyman, and this lawyer is guilty of forgery, and hath ruined a poor family."

"How!" cries the spokesman — "a lawyer! — that alters the case."

"Yes, faith," cries another of the mob, "it is lawyer Murphy. I know him very well."

"And hath he ruined a poor family? — like enough, faith, if he's a lawyer. Away with him to the justice immediately."

The bailiff now came up, desiring to know what was the matter; to whom Doctor Harrison answered that he had arrested that villain for a forgery. "How can you arrest him?" cries the bailiff; "you are no officer, nor have any warrant. Mr. Murphy is a gentleman, and he shall be used as such."

"Nay, to be sure," cries the spokesman, "there ought to be a warrant; that's the truth on't."

Digitized by Google

"There needs no warrant," cries the doctor. "I accuse him of felony; and I know so much of the law of England, that any man may arrest a felon without any warrant whatever. This villain hath undone a poor family; and I will die on the spot before I part with him."

"If the law be so," cries the orator, "that is another matter. And to be sure, to ruin a poor man is the greatest of sins. And being a lawyer too makes it so much the worse. He shall go before the justice, d—n me if he shan't go before the justice! I says the word, he shall."

"I say he is a gentleman, and shall be used according to law," cries the bailiff; "and, though you are a clergyman," said he to Harrison, "you don't shew yourself as one by your actions."

"That's a bailiff," cries one of the mob: "one lawyer will always stand by another; but I think the clergyman is a very good man, and acts becoming a clergyman, to stand by the poor."

At which words the mob all gave a great shout, and several cried out, "Bring him along, away with him to the justice!"

And now a constable appeared, and with an authoritative voice declared what he was, produced his staff, and demanded the peace.

The doctor then delivered his prisoner over to the officer, and charged him with felony; the constable received him, the attorney submitted, the bailiff was hushed, and the waves of the mob immediately subsided.

The doctor now balanced with himself how he

Digitized by Google

should proceed: at last he determined to leave Booth a little longer in captivity, and not to quit sight of Murphy before he had lodged him safe with a magistrate. They then all moved forwards to the justice; the constable and his prisoner marching first, the doctor and the bailiff following next, and about five thousand mob (for no less number were assembled in a very few minutes) following in the procession.

They found the magistrate just sitting down to his dinner; however, when he was acquainted with the doctor's profession, he immediately admitted him, and heard his business; which he no sooner perfectly understood, with all its circumstances, than he resolved, though it was then very late, and he had been fatigued all the morning with public business, to postpone all refreshment till he had discharged his duty. He accordingly adjourned the prisoner and his cause to the bailiff's house, whither he himself, with the doctor, immediately repaired, and whither the attorney was followed by a much larger number of attendants than he had been honoured with before.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER SEVEN

IN WHICH THE HISTORY DRAWS TOWARDS A CONCLUSION.

NOTHING could exceed the astonishment of Booth at the behaviour of the doctor at the time when he sallied forth in pursuit of the attorney; for which it was so impossible for him to account in any manner whatever. He remained a long time in the utmost torture of mind, till at last the bailiff's wife came to him, and asked him if the doctor was not a madman? and, in truth, he could hardly defend him from that imputation.

While he was in this perplexity the maid of the house brought him a message from Robinson, desiring the favour of seeing him above-stairs. With this he immediately complied.

When these two were alone together, and the key turned on them (for the bailiff's wife was a most careful person, and never omitted that ceremony in the absence of her husband, having always at her tongue's end that excellent proverb of "Safe bind, safe find"), Robinson, looking stedfastly upon Booth, said, "I believe, sir, you scarce remember me."

Booth answered that he thought he had seen his face somewhere before, but could not then recollect when or where.

Digitized by Google

"Indeed, sir," answered the man, "it was a place which no man can remember with pleasure. But do you not remember, a few weeks ago, that you had the misfortune to be in a certain prison in this town, where you lost a trifling sum at cards to a fellow-prisoner?"

This hint sufficiently awakened Booth's memory, and he now recollected the features of his old friend Robinson. He answered him a little surlily, "I know you now very well, but I did not imagine you would ever have reminded me of that transaction."

"Alas, sir!" answered Robinson, "whatever happened then was very trifling compared to the injuries I have done you; but if my life be spared long enough I will now undo it all: and, as I have been one of your worst enemies, I will now be one of your best friends."

He was just entering upon his story when a noise was heard below which might be almost compared to what have been heard in Holland when the dykes have given way, and the ocean in an inundation breaks in upon the land. It seemed, indeed, as if the whole world was bursting into the house at once.

Booth was a man of great firmness of mind, and he had need of it all at this instant. As for poor Robinson, the usual concomitants of guilt attended him, and he began to tremble in a violent manner.

The first person who ascended the stairs was the doctor, who no sooner saw Booth than he ran to him and embraced him, crying, "My child, I wish you joy with all my heart. Your sufferings are all

Digitized by Google

at an end, and Providence hath done you the justice at last which it will, one day or other, render to all men. You will hear all presently; but I can now only tell you that your sister is discovered and the estate is your own."

Booth was in such confusion that he scarce made any answer, and now appeared the justice and his clerk, and immediately afterwards the constable with his prisoner, the bailiff, and as many more as could possibly crowd up-stairs.

The doctor now addressed himself to the sick man, and desired him to repeat the same information before the justice which he had made already; to which Robinson readily consented.

While the clerk was taking down the information, the attorney expressed a very impatient desire to send instantly for his clerk, and expressed so much uneasiness at the confusion in which he had left his papers at home, that a thought suggested itself to the doctor that, if his house was searched, some lights and evidence relating to this affair would certainly be found; he therefore desired the justice to grant a search-warrant immediately to search his house.

The justice answered that he had no such power; that, if there was any suspicion of stolen goods, he could grant a warrant to search for them.

"How, sir!" said the doctor, "can you grant a warrant to search a man's house for a silver tea-spoon, and not in a case like this, where a man is robbed of his whole estate?"

"Hold, sir," says the sick man; "I believe I can

Digitized by Google

answer that point; for I can swear he hath several title-deeds of the estate now in his possession, which I am sure were stolen from the right owner."

The justice still hesitated. He said title-deeds savoured of the Realty, and it was not felony to steal them. If, indeed, they were taken away in a box, then it would be felony to steal the box.

"Savour of the Realty! Savour of the f—talty," said the doctor. "I never heard such incomprehensible nonsense. This is impudent, as well as childish trifling with the lives and properties of men."

"Well, sir," said Robinson, "I now am sure I can do his business; for I know he hath a silver cup in his possession which is the property of this gentleman (meaning Booth), and how he got it but by stealth let him account if he can."

"That will do," cries the justice with great pleasure. "That will do; and if you will charge him on oath with that, I will instantly grant my warrant to search his house for it." "And I will go and see it executed," cries the doctor; for it was a maxim of his, that no man could descend below himself in doing any act which may contribute to protect an innocent person, or to bring a rogue to the gallows.

The oath was instantly taken, the warrant signed, and the doctor attended the constable in the execution of it.

The clerk then proceeded in taking the information of Robinson, and had just finished it, when the doctor returned with the utmost joy in his countenance, and declared that he had sufficient evidence

Digitized by Google

of the fact in his possession. He had, indeed, two or three letters from Miss Harris in answer to the attorney's frequent demands of money for secrecy, that fully explained the whole villany.

The justice now asked the prisoner what he had to say for himself, or whether he chose to say anything in his own defence.

"Sir," said the attorney, with great confidence, "I am not to defend myself here. It will be of no service to me; for I know you neither can nor will discharge me. But I am extremely innocent of all this matter, as I doubt not but to make appear to the satisfaction of a court of justice."

The legal previous ceremonies were then gone through of binding over the prosecutor, &c., and then the attorney was committed to Newgate, whither he was escorted amidst the acclamations of the populace.

When Murphy was departed, and a little calm restored in the house, the justice made his compliments of congratulation to Booth, who, as well as he could in his present tumult of joy, returned his thanks to both the magistrate and the doctor. They were now all preparing to depart, when Mr. Bondum stept up to Booth, and said, "Hold, sir, you have forgot one thing — you have not given bail yet."

This occasioned some distress at this time, for the attorney's friend was departed; but when the justice heard this, he immediately offered himself as the other bondsman, and thus ended the affair.

It was now past six o'clock, and none of the gentlemen had yet dined. They very readily, therefore,

Digitized by Google

accepted the magistrate's invitation, and went all together to his house.

And now the very first thing that was done, even before they sat down to dinner, was to dispatch a messenger to one of the best surgeons in town to take care of Robinson, and another messenger to Booth's lodgings to prevent Amelia's concern at their staying so long.

The latter, however, was to little purpose; for Amelia's patience had been worn out before, and she had taken a hackney-coach and driven to the bailiff's, where she arrived a little after the departure of her husband, and was thence directed to the justice's.

Though there was no kind of reason for Amelia's fright at hearing that her husband and Doctor Harrison were gone before the justice, and though she indeed imagined that they were there in the light of complainants, not of offenders, yet so tender were her fears for her husband, and so much had her gentle spirits been lately agitated, that she had a thousand apprehensions of she knew not what. When she arrived, therefore, at the house, she ran directly into the room where all the company were at dinner, scarce knowing what she did or whither she was going.

She found her husband in such a situation, and discovered such chearfulness in his countenance, that so violent a turn was given to her spirits that she was just able, with the assistance of a glass of water, to support herself. She soon, however, recovered her calmness, and in a little time began to eat what might indeed be almost called her breakfast.

Digitized by Google

The justice now wished her joy of what had happened that day, for which she kindly thanked him, apprehending he meant the liberty of her husband. His worship might perhaps have explained himself more largely had not the doctor given him a timely wink; for this wise and good man was fearful of making such a discovery all at once to Amelia, lest it should overpower her, and luckily the justice's wife was not well enough acquainted with the matter to say anything more on it than barely to assure the lady that she joined in her husband's congratulation.

Amelia was then in a clean white gown, which she had that day redeemed, and was, indeed, dressed all over with great neatness and exactness; with the glow therefore which arose in her features from finding her husband released from his captivity, she made so charming a figure, that she attracted the eyes of the magistrate and of his wife, and they both agreed when they were alone that they had never seen so charming a creature; nay, Booth himself afterwards told her that he scarce ever remembered her to look so extremely beautiful as she did that evening.

Whether Amelia's beauty, or the reflexion on the remarkable act of justice he had performed, or whatever motive filled the magistrate with extraordinary good humour, and opened his heart and cellars, I will not determine; but he gave them so hearty a welcome, and they were all so pleased with each other, that Amelia, for that one night, trusted the care of her children to the woman where they lodged, nor

Digitized by Google

did the company rise from table till the clock struck eleven.

They then separated. Amelia and Booth, having been set down at their lodgings, retired into each other's arms; nor did Booth that evening, by the doctor's advice, mention one word of the grand affair to his wife.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER EIGHT

THUS THIS HISTORY DRAWS NEARER TO A CONCLUSION.

IN the morning early Amelia received the following letter from Mrs. Atkinson:

"The surgeon of the regiment, to which the captain my husband lately belonged, and who came this evening to see the captain, hath almost frightened me out of my wits by a strange story of your husband being committed to prison by a justice of peace for forgery. For Heaven's sake send me the truth. If my husband can be of any service, weak as he is, he will be carried in a chair to serve a brother officer for whom he hath a regard, which I need not mention. Or if the sum of twenty pound will be of any service to you, I will wait upon you with it the moment I can get my cloaths on, the morning you receive this; for it is too late to send to-night. The captain begs his hearty service and respects, and believe me, Dear Madam,

"Your ever affectionate friend,
and humble servant,
F. ATKINSON."

When Amelia read this letter to Booth they were both equally surprized, she at the commitment for forgery, and he at seeing such a letter from Mrs. Atkinson; for he was a stranger yet to the reconciliation that had happened.

Digitized by Google

Booth's doubts were first satisfied by Amelia, from which he received great pleasure; for he really had a very great affection and fondness for Mr. Atkinson, who, indeed, so well deserved it. "Well, my dear," said he to Amelia, smiling, "shall we accept this generous offer?"

"O fy! no, certainly," answered she.

"Why not?" cries Booth; "it is but a trifle; and yet it will be of great service to us."

"But consider, my dear," said she, "how ill these poor people can spare it."

"They can spare it for a little while," said Booth, "and we shall soon pay it them again."

"When, my dear?" said Amelia. "Do, my dear Will, consider our wretched circumstances. I beg you let us go into the country immediately, and live upon bread and water till Fortune pleases to smile upon us."

"I am convinced that day is not far off," said Booth. "However, give me leave to send an answer to Mrs. Atkinson, that we shall be glad of her company immediately to breakfast."

"You know I never contradict you," said she, "but I assure you it is contrary to my inclinations to take this money."

"Well, suffer me," cries he, "to act this once contrary to your inclinations." He then writ a short note to Mrs. Atkinson, and dispatched it away immediately; which when he had done, Amelia said, "I shall be glad of Mrs. Atkinson's company to breakfast; but yet I wish you would oblige me in refusing this money. Take five guineas only. That

Digitized by Google

is indeed such a sum as, if we never should pay it, would sit light on my mind. The last persons in the world from whom I would receive favours of that sort are the poor and generous."

"You can receive favours only from the generous," cries Booth; "and, to be plain with you, there are very few who are generous that are not poor."

"What think you," said she, "of Dr. Harrison?"

"I do assure you," said Booth, "he is far from being rich. The doctor hath an income of little more than six hundred pound a-year, and I am convinced he gives away four of it. Indeed, he is one of the best œconomists in the world: but yet I am positive he never was at any time possessed of five hundred pound, since he hath been a man. Consider, dear Emily, the late obligations we have to this gentleman; it would be unreasonable to expect more, at least at present; my half-pay is mortgaged for a year to come. How then shall we live?"

"By our labour," answered she; "I am able to labour, and I am sure I am not ashamed of it."

"And do you really think you can support such a life?"

"I am sure I could be happy in it," answered Amelia. "And why not I as well as a thousand others, who have not the happiness of such a husband to make life delicious? why should I complain of my hard fate while so many who are much poorer than I enjoy theirs? Am I of a superior rank of being to the wife of the honest labourer? am I not partaker of one common nature with her?"

"My angel," cries Booth, "it delights me to hear

Digitized by Google

you talk thus, and for a reason you little guess; for I am assured that one who can so heroically endure adversity, will bear prosperity with equal greatness of soul; for the mind that cannot be dejected by the former, is not likely to be transported with the latter."

"If it had pleased Heaven," cried she, "to have tried me, I think, at least I hope, I should have preserved my humility."

"Then, my dear," said he, "I will relate you a dream I had last night. You know you lately mentioned a dream of yours."

"Do so," said she; "I am attentive."

"I dreamt," said he, "this night, that we were in the most miserable situation imaginable; indeed, in the situation we were yesterday morning, or rather worse; that I was laid in a prison for debt, and that you wanted a morsel of bread to feed the mouths of your hungry children. At length (for nothing you know is quicker than the transition in dreams) Dr. Harrison methought came to me, with chearfulness and joy in his countenance. The prison-doors immediately flew open, and Dr. Harrison introduced you, gayly though not richly dressed. That you gently chid me for staying so long. All on a sudden appeared a coach with four horses to it, in which was a maid-servant with our two children. We both immediately went into the coach, and, taking our leave of the doctor, set out towards your country-house; for yours I dreamt it was. I only ask you now, if this was real, and the transition almost as sudden, could you support it?"

Digitized by Google

Amelia was going to answer, when Mrs. Atkinson came into the room, and after very little previous ceremony, presented Booth with a bank-note, which he received of her, saying he would very soon repay it; a promise that a little offended Amelia, as she thought he had no chance of keeping it.

The doctor presently arrived, and the company sat down to breakfast, during which Mrs. Atkinson entertained them with the history of the doctors that had attended her husband, by whose advice Atkinson was recovered from everything but the weakness which his distemper had occasioned.

When the tea-table was removed Booth told the doctor that he had acquainted his wife with a dream he had last night. "I dreamt, doctor," said he, "that she was restored to her estate."

"Very well," said the doctor; "and if I am to be the Oneiropolus, I believe the dream will come to pass. To say the truth, I have rather a better opinion of dreams than Horace had. Old Homer says they come from Jupiter; and as to your dream, I have often had it in my waking thoughts, that some time or other that roguery (for so I was always convinced it was) would be brought to light; for the same Homer says, as you, madam (meaning Mrs. Atkinson), very well know,

Εἴπερ γάρ τε καὶ αὐτίκ' Ὀλύμπιος οὐκ ἐτέλεσσεν,
Ἔκ τε καὶ ὀψὲ τελεῖ· σύν τε μεγάλῳ ἀπέτισαν
Σὺν σφῇσιν κεφαλῇσι, γυναιξί τε καὶ τεκέεσσιν.[1]

[1] If Jupiter doth not immediately execute his vengeance, he will however execute it at last; and their transgressions shall fall heavily on their own heads, and on their wives and children.

Digitized by Google

"I have no Greek ears, sir," said Mrs. Atkinson. "I believe I could understand it in the Delphin Homer."

"I wish," cries he, "my dear child (to Amelia), you would read a little in the Delphin Aristotle, or else in some Christian divine, to learn a doctrine which you will one day have a use for. I mean to bear the hardest of all human conflicts, and support with an even temper, and without any violent transports of mind, a sudden gust of prosperity."

"Indeed," cries Amelia, "I should almost think my husband and you, doctor, had some very good news to tell me, by your using, both of you, the same introduction. As far as I know myself, I think I can answer I can support any degree of prosperity, and I think I yesterday shewed I could: for I do assure you, it is not in the power of fortune to try me with such another transition from grief to joy, as I conceived from seeing my husband in prison and at liberty."

"Well, you are a good girl," cries the doctor, "and after I have put on my spectacles I will try you."

The doctor then took out a newspaper, and read as follows:

"'Yesterday one Murphy, an eminent attorney-at-law, was committed to Newgate for the forgery of a will under which an estate hath been for many years detained from the right owner.'

"Now in this paragraph there is something very remarkable, and that is — that it is true: but *opus est explanatu.* In the Delphin edition of this news-

Digitized by Google

paper there is the following note upon the words right owner: — 'The right owner of this estate is a young lady of the highest merit, whose maiden name was Harris, and who some time since was married to an idle fellow, one Lieutenant Booth. And the best historians assure us that letters from the elder sister of this lady, which manifestly prove the forgery and clear up the whole affair, are in the hands of an old Parson called Doctor Harrison.'"

"And is this really true?" cries Amelia.

"Yes, really and sincerely," cries the doctor. "The whole estate; for your mother left it you all, and is as surely yours as if you was already in possession."

"Gracious Heaven!" cries she, falling on her knees, "I thank you!" And then starting up, she ran to her husband, and, embracing him, cried, "My dear love, I wish you joy; and I ought in gratitude to wish it you; for you are the cause of mine. It is upon yours and my children's account that I principally rejoice."

Mrs. Atkinson rose from her chair, and jumped about the room for joy, repeating,

Turne, quod optanti divûm promittere nemo
Auderet, volvenda dies, en, attulit ultro.[1]

Amelia now threw herself into a chair, complained she was a little faint, and begged a glass of water. The doctor advised her to be blooded; but she refused, saying she required a vent of another kind.

[1] "What none of all the Gods could grant thy vows,
That, Turnus, this auspicious day bestows."

Digitized by Google

She then desired her children to be brought to her, whom she immediately caught in her arms, and, having profusely cried over them for several minutes, declared she was easy. After which she soon regained her usual temper and complexion.

That day they dined together, and in the afternoon they all, except the doctor, visited Captain Atkinson; he repaired to the bailiff's house to visit the sick man, whom he found very chearful, the surgeon having assured him that he was in no danger.

The doctor had a long spiritual discourse with Robinson, who assured him that he sincerely repented of his past life, that he was resolved to lead his future days in a different manner, and to make what amends he could for his sins to the society, by bringing one of the greatest rogues in it to justice. There was a circumstance which much pleased the doctor, and made him conclude that, however Robinson had been corrupted by his old master, he had naturally a good disposition. This was, that Robinson declared he was chiefly induced to the discovery by what had happened at the pawnbroker's, and by the miseries which he there perceived he had been instrumental in bringing on Booth and his family.

The next day Booth and his wife, at the doctor's instance, dined with Colonel James and his lady, where they were received with great civility, and all matters were accommodated without Booth ever knowing a syllable of the challenge even to this day.

The doctor insisted very strongly on having Miss

Digitized by Google

Harris taken into custody, and said, if she was his sister, he would deliver her to justice. He added besides, that it was impossible to skreen her and carry on the prosecution, or, indeed, recover the estate. Amelia at last begged the delay of one day only, in which time she wrote a letter to her sister, informing her of the discovery, and the danger in which she stood, and begged her earnestly to make her escape, with many assurances that she would never suffer her to know any distress. This letter she sent away express, and it had the desired effect; for Miss Harris, having received sufficient information from the attorney to the same purpose, immediately set out for Poole, and from thence to France, carrying with her all her money, most of her cloaths, and some few jewels. She had, indeed, packed up plate and jewels to the value of two thousand pound and upwards. But Booth, to whom Amelia communicated the letter, prevented her by ordering the man that went with the express (who had been a serjeant of the foot-guards recommended to him by Atkinson) to suffer the lady to go whither she pleased, but not to take anything with her except her cloaths, which he was carefully to search. These orders were obeyed punctually, and with these she was obliged to comply.

Two days after the bird was flown a warrant from the lord chief justice arrived to take her up, the messenger of which returned with the news of her flight, highly to the satisfaction of Amelia, and consequently of Booth, and, indeed, not greatly to the grief of the doctor.

Digitized by Google

A HAPPY GATHERING

About a week afterwards Booth and Amelia, with their children, and Captain Atkinson and his lady, all set forward together for Amelia's house, where they arrived amidst the acclamations of all the neighbours, and every public demonstration of joy.

They found the house ready prepared to receive them by Atkinson's friend the old serjeant, and a good dinner prepared for them by Amelia's old nurse, who was addressed with the utmost duty by her son and daughter, most affectionately caressed by Booth and his wife, and by Amelia's absolute command seated next to herself at the table. At which, perhaps, were assembled some of the best and happiest people then in the world.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER NINE

IN WHICH THE HISTORY IS CONCLUDED.

HAVING brought our history to a conclusion, as to those points in which we presume our reader was chiefly interested, in the foregoing chapter, we shall in this, by way of epilogue, endeavour to satisfy his curiosity as to what hath since happened to the principal personages of whom we have treated in the foregoing pages.

Colonel James and his lady, after living in a polite manner for many years together, at last agreed to live in as polite a manner asunder. The colonel hath kept Miss Matthews ever since, and is at length grown to doat on her (though now very disagreeable in her person, and immensely fat) to such a degree, that he submits to be treated by her in the most tyrannical manner.

He allows his lady eight hundred pound a-year, with which she divides her time between Tunbridge, Bath, and London, and passes about nine hours in the twenty-four at cards. Her income is lately increased by three thousand pound left her by her brother Colonel Bath, who was killed in a duel about six years ago by a gentleman who told the colonel he differed from him in opinion.

Digitized by Google

CONCLUSION

The noble peer and Mrs. Ellison have been both dead several years, and both of the consequences of their favourite vices; Mrs. Ellison having fallen a martyr to her liquor, and the other to his amours, by which he was at last become so rotten that he stunk above-ground.

The attorney, Murphy, was brought to his trial at the Old Bailey, where, after much quibbling about the meaning of a very plain act of parliament, he was at length convicted of forgery, and was soon afterwards hanged at Tyburn.

The witness for some time seemed to reform his life, and received a small pension from Booth; after which he returned to vicious courses, took a purse on the highway, was detected and taken, and followed the last steps of his old master. So apt are men whose manners have been once thoroughly corrupted, to return, from any dawn of an amendment, into the dark paths of vice.

As to Miss Harris, she lived three years with a broken heart at Boulogne, where she received annually fifty pound from her sister, who was hardly prevailed on by Dr. Harrison not to send her a hundred, and then died in a most miserable manner.

Mr. Atkinson upon the whole hath led a very happy life with his wife, though he hath been sometimes obliged to pay proper homage to her superior understanding and knowledge. This, however, he chearfully submits to, and she makes him proper returns of fondness. They have two fine boys, of whom they are equally fond. He is lately advanced to the rank of captain, and last summer both he and

Digitized by Google

his wife paid a visit of three months to Booth and his wife.

Dr. Harrison is grown old in years and in honour, beloved and respected by all his parishioners and by all his neighbours. He divides his time between his parish, his old town, and Booth's — at which last place he had, two years ago, a gentle fit of the gout, being the first attack of that distemper. During this fit Amelia was his nurse, and her two oldest daughters sat up alternately with him for a whole week. The eldest of those girls, whose name is Amelia, is his favourite; she is the picture of her mother, and it is thought the doctor hath distinguished her in his will, for he hath declared that he will leave his whole fortune, except some few charities, among Amelia's children.

As to Booth and Amelia, Fortune seems to have made them large amends for the tricks she played them in their youth. They have, ever since the above period of this history, enjoyed an uninterrupted course of health and happiness. In about six weeks after Booth's first coming into the country he went to London and paid all his debts of honour; after which, and a stay of two days only, he returned into the country, and hath never since been thirty miles from home. He hath two boys and four girls; the eldest of the boys, he who hath made his appearance in this history, is just come from the university, and is one of the finest gentlemen and best scholars of his age. The second is just going from school, and is intended for the church, that being his own choice. His eldest daughter is a woman grown, but

Digitized by Google

we must not mention her age. A marriage was proposed to her the other day with a young fellow of a good estate, but she never would see him more than once: "For Doctor Harrison," says she, "told me he was illiterate, and I am sure he is ill-natured." The second girl is three years younger than her sister, and the others are yet children.

Amelia is still the finest woman in England of her age. Booth himself often avers she is as handsome as ever. Nothing can equal the serenity of their lives. Amelia declared to me the other day, that she did not remember to have seen her husband out of humour these ten years; and, upon my insinuating to her that he had the best of wives, she answered with a smile that she ought to be so, for that he had made her the happiest of women.

THE END

Digitized by Google